

PHILOSOPHY OF GURU NANAK

SURINDAR SINGH KOHLI



**PUBLICATION BUREAU
PANJAB UNIVERSITY
CHANDIGARH**

PHILOSOPHY OF GURU NANAK

By

Dr. Surindar Singh Kohli



**PUBLICATION BUREAU
PANJAB UNIVERSITY
C H A N D I G A R H**

Published by

R. K. MALHOTRA

Secretary, Publication Bureau

Panjab University, Chandigarh

First Edition : 1969

Reprint : 1980

Price : Rs. **55/-**

Printed at

PECO PRINTING PRESS

89, Industrial Area, Chandigarh

PREFATORY NOTE

Guru Nanak has a unique place amongst the spiritual leaders, preceptors, reformers and saints of India. His teachings have a universal appeal and they hold good for all ages.

The impact of this great Teacher on Indian society during the last 500 years cannot be easily estimated. In the field of spirituality and ethics he has deeply influenced the lives, thinking and conduct of millions of people.

India—and more so the Punjab—can legitimately feel proud that this man of God was born in this land. But the great Master did not confine his mission to this country; he travelled far and wide, to far-off lands and countries in order to enlighten humanity as a whole and deliver to them his message of love, peace, devotion to God, social justice, religious tolerance and universal brotherhood of man. For Guru Nanak no country was foreign and no people were alien.

We are fortunate that the 500th Birth Anniversary of the great Guru has fallen during our life. It is an opportunity for mankind to acknowledge its debt of gratitude to its great benefactor and teacher. It should be a matter of gratification for all concerned that the auspicious occasion is being celebrated, in a befitting manner, throughout India, as well as at numerous places abroad.

The Panjab University, Chandigarh also decided to pay its respectful homage to Guru Nanak not only by holding the celebrations on a level which the occasion demanded, but also by publishing nine standard and scholarly books on the life,

teachings, philosophy, poetry and other aspects of the great teacher.

The authors of all these books have attempted to deal with the subject-matter of their respective books in an objective, dispassionate, authentic and scholarly manner. There can be difference of opinion amongst scholars, but honest differences should not be unwelcome in the world of scholarship.

The present book is one of the set which is being published by the Panjab University on the auspicious occasion.

In this book the author has made a comparative study of Guru Nanak's philosophy with other religious systems of the world in the light of metaphysics, ethics and mysticism. A comparative study of his thought has also been made with the six systems of Hindu philosophy, the Bhakti cults of India and the Modern Thought.

* * *

I should also like to take this opportunity to place on record my appreciation for Shri Bal Krishna, Secretary, Publication Bureau, Panjab University, who has produced this book, as well as all the other books of the set, in a very short time and in a very efficient manner.

Panjab University
Chandigarh

November 23, 1969

SURAJ BHAN
Vice-Chancellor

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of Guru Nanak is a religious philosophy, which lays emphasis on the devotion to God. It is a mirror of Sikh Religion. Guru Nanak, the founder of this religion, was its first and foremost preacher. He unfolded his thoughts himself throughout India, crossed the Indian borders at several points and propagated his mission in Ceylon, Tibet, China, Middle East etc., and covered the major centres of prominent world religions. In India, he came across the devotees of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, adherents of six systems of Hindu philosophy and representatives of various Bhakti cults. In Tibet and China, he met the followers of Confucianism and Taoism; and in all probability met some adherents of Shinto religion. In Middle East, he held discussions with prominent leaders of Islam at Mecca, Medina and Baghdad. In Palestine, he met the chief priests of Judaism and Christianity and in Teheran those of Zoroastrianism. Thus, he practically came into contact with the protagonists of all the prominent religious systems of the world. In him we find a unique personality who was fearless and frank in his expressions, who journeyed thousands of miles with the idea of *One World Religion*, who raised his voice against formalism, ritualism and self-mortification, who wanted to demolish the barriers of prejudices between one religion and the other, and who was an apostle of world-peace and unity.

This book is an attempt to bring before the world the thought-currents of the great Guru, which made a great impact on the contemporary world-scene. Even today, we find the impress of his ideas on several groups of people among non-Sikhs in distant areas. He is known as *Rimpoche of Amritsar* in Tibet, as *Nanak Pir Wali Hind* in Arabian countries, as *Balāg Dān* in Afghanistan, as

Rishi Nanak, Baba Nanak elsewhere. The *Yogis* wanted to bring him in their fold, the Muslims claimed him as a muslim divine, the Hindus considered him a Hindu Guru. He was, in fact, Nanak Nirankari, a man devoted to the Formless Lord, a representative of all humanity.

The philosophic system of Guru Nanak has its metaphysics, ethics, mysticism and cosmology. In this book, in the light of these aspects, a comparative study has been made with other religious systems of the world. It has also been thought necessary to compare the thought of Guru Nanak with the six systems of Hindu philosophy, the Bhakti cults of India, the ancient philosophers and the modern thought. The appendices contain the thought-content of the Guru in his two major poems *Japji* and *Āsā ki Vār*. A short chapter on *Amrit* has been added in the appendices in order to correlate the thought of Guru Nanak with the thought of Guru Gobind Singh.

The quotations from the poetry of Guru Nanak have been given wherever considered necessary. For the convenience of the foreign reader, the quotations have been transliterated in Roman characters with diacritical marks. The page number of the *Ādi Granth*, from which the quotation has been taken, has also been mentioned.

I shall feel amply rewarded, if this book gives a clear-cut idea about the thought-content of the Guru to a common reader.

My thanks are due to Shri Suraj Bhan ji, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, for his encouragement and to Shri Bal Krishna, Secretary, Publication Bureau, for the great pains he has taken in the printing and publication of the book.

Chandigarh
November 23, 1969

SURINDAR SINGH KOHLI

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. Life and Works of Guru Nanak	1
2. The Age of Guru Nanak	14
3. Guru Nanak's Concept of Ultimate Reality	26
4. Ethics of Guru Nanak	39
5. Mysticism of Guru Nanak	55
6. Cosmogony and Cosmology as propounded by Guru Nanak	80
7. Guru Nanak and World Religions (Indian)	93
8. Guru Nanak and World Religions (Middle Eastern)	104
9. Guru Nanak and World Religions (Chinese and Japanese)	120
10. Guru Nanak and Six Systems of Hindu Philosophy	127
11. Guru Nanak and Bhakti Cults	143
12. Guru Nanak, Ancient Philosophers and Modern Thought	152
APPENDICES	
I-- (A) A Critical Study of <i>Japji</i>	169
I-- (B) A Critical Study of <i>Āsā Kī Vār</i>	180
II-- Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh and Amrit	190
BIBLIOGRAPHY	199

Chapter I

LIFE AND WORKS OF GURU NANAK

Guru Nanak was born in central Punjab at *Rai Bhoi di Talwandi* (known as Nankana Sahib, now in West Pakistan) in A.D. 1469. Some biographers have mentioned *Kartik Purnima* as the day of his birth, but others fix it on *Baisakh Shudi III*. He was the lineal descendant of Kush, one of the sons of Lord Rama. The name of his grandfather was Shiv Ram, who had two sons namely Kalyan Chand and Lal Chand. Kalyan Chand was born in 1435 and Lal Chand in 1443. Guru Nanak was the son of Kalyan Chand, commonly known as Mehta Kalu. Kalu was a petty official under the administration of Rae Bular, a Lodhi Pathan chief.

At the time of the birth of Guru Nanak, Behlol Lodhi was the ruler of Delhi Sultanate. The Muslim officials of the time exhibited a spirit of intolerance towards the Hindu subjects. In his first *Vār*, Bhai Gurdas has portrayed the prevailing conditions on the eve of the birth of Guru Nanak.

Even as a small child Guru Nanak was seen absorbed in deep meditation. He talked very little, but whenever he had an opportunity to speak, his sweet words emphasised the ideal of the realisation of Ultimate Reality. In 1475, when he was six years old, he was sent to learn the three R's under

the supervision of Gopal Pandit. The thoughts expressed by the young Guru during his discussion with the Pandit at such a small age are contained in his composition entitled *Patti*. In 1478 he was put under the tutorship of Pandit Brij Nath Sharma for learning Sanskrit, but within a very short time the Pandit realised the awakened potent faculties of the child. At the age of eleven i.e. in 1480 the young Guru was sent to Maulana Qutb-ud-Din to learn Persian. It is said that the poem entitled *Seeharfi* (it forms part of the apocryphal literature in the name of the Guru) was composed at this time.

In 1480 the parents of the Guru called in their family *purohit* (priest) to perform the sacrament of the sacred thread, but the young Guru refused to wear the breakable thread and asked for a permanent thread, which the *purohit* could not supply. Since the Guru passed most of his time in solitude, it was thought by elders that the boy was suffering from some ailment; therefore they called in the family doctor. When he began to feel the pulse of the boy, he was asked to find out such remedy which may remove all the ills of humanity. Gradually people in the surrounding area came to know of the super-wisdom of the boy. Rae Bular, the chief of the town, manifested great faith in him.

In 1484, at the age of fifteen, the Guru, accompanied by Mardana, went to Pakpattan during the fair being held in memory of Farid Shakarganj, the great Muslim saint. He met there Sheikh

Ibrahim or Sheikh Brahm, the successor of Baba Farid. The same year, as directed by his father, the Guru went to do some business, but the amount, which was given for the purchase of materials, was spent in feeding and clothing the needy hermits. At that time, the Guru was accompanied by Bhai Bala.

Nanaki, the elder sister of the Guru, lived at Sultanpur with her husband, Jai Ram, who was an official of Nawab Daulat Khan. With an idea to reform the ways of his son, Mehta Kalu sent the Guru to his daughter at Sultanpur. With the efforts of Jai Ram, the Guru was appointed the store-keeper of the Nawab in 1485. He accomplished this task with great sagacity. In 1487 he was married to Sulakhni, the daughter of Mool Chand Chona of village Pakkho in Gurdaspur district. His elder son, Baba Sri Chand, was born in 1494 and the younger son, Baba Lakhmi Das, in 1496.

In 1497, one day the Guru disappeared while taking a bath in a nearby stream. He was considered to have been drowned but to the surprise of every body he appeared again after three days from the same spot, where he had entered the water. This incident brought a great change in the life of the Guru. He had been summoned into the presence of the Lord, where he received the instructions for his future career. It was necessary for him to move into the world with his message; therefore he had to resign from his service. His first announcement was : "There is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim". He

thought that the condition of India could be reformed if Hindus became true Hindus and Muslims true Muslims.

In the beginning, the Guru propagated his mission in the neighbouring areas, but soon he finalised his programme and set out for distant countries and lands. He travelled in all the four directions covering thousands of miles and remaining out of his own province for several years at a stretch.

In 1499, he started from Sultanpur and went to Lahore. After staying there for a few days he went to Eminabad, where he stayed with a mason called Lalo. From Eminabad, he went to Sialkot and then to Talwandi.

He started on his first journey in 1501. During this journey, he went to religious centres and holy places of Hindus in the East. Passing through Chunian, Kurukshetra, Pehowa and Karnal, he reached Hardwar and then went to Delhi. From there, going through Aligarh, Mathura, Kanpur, Lucknow, Ayodhya, he came to Banaras. It is said that he met the famous saint Kabir there. Then passing through Buxar, Chhapra etc., he reached Patna. From there he visited Rajgir and Gaya. Passing through Monghyr, Bhagalpur, Malda, Murshidabad, Burdwan, Dacca etc., he reached Kamrup. Then he visited Sylhet, Cachar, Manipur and Loshai. On his return journey he visited Agartala, Chandpur, Calcutta, Cuttack, Jagannath Puri, Jabalpur, Chanderi, Jhansi, Gwalior, Bharatpur, Rewari,

Gurgaon, Jagraon etc. He reached back Sultanpur in 1510.

In the same year, the Guru started on his second journey to the South. During this journey, the following important places were visited by the Guru : Kasur, Bhatinda, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Ajmer, Pushkar, Nasirabad, Lodhipur, Abu, Ahmednagar, Ujjain, Hoshangabad, Narsinghpur, Nagpur, Fatehabad, Golconda, Hyderabad, Bider, Pandharpur, Tanjore, Trichanapalli, Nagapattam, Rameshwar, Sangladip, Coimbatore, Calicut, Goa, Ratnagiri, Nasik, Panchvati, Baroda, Ahmedabad, Bhavnagar, Junagarh, Porbander, Dwarka, Umarkot, Tanda, Shujabad, Uch, Tulamba, Ferozepore etc. Meeting his parents at Talwandi, he reached Sultanpur in 1514. In this journey also the Guru visited several holy places of the Hindus.

After staying with his sister for a few days, the Guru went to Lahore. From there he proceeded to village Kahnur in Gurdaspur district on the banks of the Ravi where, at the request of a peasant named Doda, he founded Kartarpur. After the completion of the construction, he brought his family to this place.

In 1514, the Guru went on his third journey to the North. The important places that he visited during this journey are as follows : Nurpur, Kangra, Jwalamukhi, Dalhousie, Dharamsala, Manikaran, Rawalsar, Nadaun, Suket, Mandi, Kulu, Chamba, Bilaspur, Kahlur, Kiratpur, Spatu, Garhwal, Mussorie, Chakrota, Sri Nagar, Badri Narayan, Mansarovar, Bhim Kot, Ranikhet, Almora, Nainital,

Gorakhmatta, Pilibhit, Gorakhpur, Dholgarh, Pashupati Mahadev (in Nepal), Tamlung, Lachen (Sikkim), Darjeeling, Trashy Shu Dzong (Bhutan), Lakhim, Brahmkund, Shivpur, Raniganj, Janakpur, Sitamarhi, Kashipur, Sitapur, Jullundur etc. In 1517 he reached the new colony, Kartarpur.

After staying at Kartarpur for sometime, the Guru started on his fourth journey to the West. The important places the Guru visited during this journey are the following : Eminabad, Wazirabad, Gujrat, Rohtas, Pind Dadan Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Shikarpur, Hyderabad (Sind), Karachi, Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Teheran, Jalalabad, Peshawar, Hasan Abdal, Poonch, Sialkot etc. He returned to Eminabad in 1521 when Babur the Mughal King invaded that place. After that the Guru came to Kartarpur and settled down there for the rest of his life. During this part of his life, he went to visit Achal Vatala, Multan, Hardwar etc.

During his journeys, the Guru went to the main religious centres of his time and propagated his school of thought. He was the only religious leader who travelled most for the welfare of humanity. He went not only throughout the length and breadth of India, but also visited Arabian countries, Afghanistan, Tibet and Ceylon. Several places mentioned in the biographies of the Guru have not been located as yet. Further research may reveal his journeys to other far-off places and countries. Bhai Gurdas has mentioned that the Guru visited all the nine regions of the world.

The worldly life of the Guru came to an end in 1539 at the age of about seventy years. While still alive, he announced that Bhai Lehna (called Guru Angad Dev) would be his successor. He did not consider his sons so mature as to be installed as Guru in his place. His elder son Baba Sri Chand was the founder of *Udasi* sect. The younger son Baba Lakhmi Das was a householder.

The sources about the life of the Guru are either *Janamsakhis* (biographies) or the places built in his memory. Some people are said to have made the *Janamsakhis* unauthentic by deliberately twisting the existing material or adding some false and objectionable incidents. The personality of the Guru is reflected in his compositions.

Guru's Works

From the accounts contained in the *Janamsakhis*, we gather that the Guru began to compose poetry at a very early age. Maturity of his internal spiritual state at his young age seems reflected in his poetry of this period. The Guru has called himself as "Nanak *Shāir*" or "Nanak—the Poet". He was not only a great reformer and preacher, but also a great poet. He composed and sang his verses wherever he went. The preservation of these verses by the people of the relative area induced the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan, to send messages for the despatch of these verses and hymns to him in connection with the compilation of the *Ādi Granth*.

There is no doubt about the authenticity of the compositions of the Guru included in the *Ādi Granth*, but, like other great poets, a good deal of apocryphal literature sprang up after his passing away. The philosophy of the Guru discussed in the present work is based on his writings given in the *Ādi Granth*.

Besides *Jappī*, a longer poem in the beginning and four Sahaskriti *shlokas* and 33 surplus Var *shlokas* in the concluding portion of the *Ādi Granth*, the compositions of the Guru are found in the following Ragas : Sirī, Mājh, Gaurī Guāreri, Āsā, Gūjri, Bihāgrā, Vadhans, Sorath, Dhanāsari, Tilang, Sūhi, Bilāwal, Rāmkali, Mārū, Tukhārī, Bhario, Basant, Sārang, Malār and Parbhātī Bibhās. *Patti*, *Thittin*, *Dakhni Oamkār*, *Siddh Goshta*, *Bārāmāhā Tukhārī* and *Vārs* (of Mājh, Āsā and Malār) are the longer poems of the Guru included in the Ragas. The tradition of writing poetry in Ragas is very old in India and it was followed by the saint-poets of the *Ādi Granth*.

Like other stalwarts of the Bhakti movement, the Guru composed his hymns in the language of the people. He wrote his poems in Punjabi, saint-language, Sahaskriti and colloquial Persian. The saint-language was understood throughout India. The Guru is very critical of those persons who having been demoralised had adopted the language of the rulers :

“This is the turn of the Sheikhs, who call the Primal *Purusha* by the name ‘Allah’.”

“In every home all the people use the word ‘Mian’. You have the other language.”

He talked of Kshtriyas in the following manner :

“*Kshtriyas* have forsaken their duty and have adopted the language of the *Malechhas*.”

This does not mean that the Guru had any aversion for any language. He respected all the languages but he considered the adoption of another language as a sign of slavery; therefore he condemned it. Wherever he went, he talked to the people in a language familiar to them. He addressed the Pandits in Sahaskriti and the Muslims in colloquial Persian, though very rarely.

The poetry of the Guru is metrical and musical. He adopted all the prevalent forms of folk-poetry in folk-metres. The prominent stanza-forms used by him are : *Chaupai*, *Dohira*, *Dawayya*, *Kundaliya*, *Chitrakala* and *Tatank*. Besides general hymns, the popular forms of poetry in which he composed his verses are *Vār*, *Chhant*, *Shloka*, *Patti*, *Bārāmāhā*, *Pehre* and *Thittin*. The poetry of the Guru is marked by pithy verses and richness of imagery. His images are derived both from nature and household life. Because of his wide travels, the imagery from nature is varied and diverse.

The major works of the Guru are *Japji*, *Siddh Goshita*, *Āsā ki Vār*, *Mājh ki Vār*, *Malār ki Vār* and *Dakhni Oamkār*. *Japji* is his outstanding composition, which is recited every morning by the disciples

of the Guru, *Āsā ki Vār* is the next important composition. It is sung every day in the morning in Sikh temples.

A critical study of *Jappī* and *Āsā ki Vār* is given in the appendix.

Siddh Goshta : This poem, as its name suggests, contains the conversation in poetry of *Siddhas* or *Yogis* with Guru Nanak. The *Yogis* assembled on one side, while Guru Nanak and his companions or disciples were on the other side; there was a general discussion on the concept of Yoga. The poem is in question-answer form and enlightens us on the ways of life enjoined by Guru Nanak and *Yogis*. For example, the *Yogis* questioned Guru Nanak thus :

Where is He hidden ? Who is liberated ? What is his method of release from inside and outside ?

Who comes ? Who goes ? Who pervades the three worlds ?
and the Guru replied :

He is hidden in every heart. The *Gurmukh* (the true disciple) is liberated.

The *Word* is the method of release from inside and outside.

The *Mammukh* (the follower of mammon) comes, goes and is destroyed.

The *Gurmukh* merges in Truth, saith Nanak. (13)

This poem presents the qualifications of *Gurmukh* (Prefect man) in detail. In the end, the following

conclusion is drawn :

There can never be yoga without the Name.

Think on this in your mind. (68)

Since there was discussion with the *Yogis*, the use of *Yogic* terminology in this poem was natural. An understanding of this terminology helps us towards a fuller appreciation of this poem.

Examples of the terminology

1. When there was no body and no heart, where did the mind reside ?

If there had been no prop for navel-lotus, then where would the wind have stayed ? (66)

2. When the Unknowable makes us know, we recognise *Irā*, *Pinglā* and *Sukhmanā*. (60)

Bārāmāhā Tukhari : It is the very first available *Bārāmāhā* in Panjabi literature. Besides a few stanzas of the prologue and epilogue, this poem contains one stanza for each month of the year. It is said that like *Jappī* this poem was written in the later years of the life of the Guru, when he settled at Kartarpur, because the area, i.e., *Bar* is mentioned in the poem :

In *Chet* the good spring hath come and the beetles look fine.

The forest flowers have blossomed in *Bar* and I want my Lord to come home.

This *Bārāmāhā* is marked by the exuberance of love. The lady pines for her Lord. The seasons

change, the flowers blossom, but the lady remains gloomy because of the absence of her Lord from her home.

Oamkār and Pattī : These two poems are based on two current alphabets. The letters are represented by different stanzas, which encase the Guru's ideas and ideals. The alphabet used in the latter poem is *Gurmukhi*.

Mājh ki Vār and *Malār ki Vār* : Like *Āsā ki Vār* the shlokas of these two *Vārs* contain several important philosophical points besides the description of different aspects of contemporary life. In *Mājh ki Vār* the Guru has rejected the *Karmas* of Jainas and Muslims. Some of the Guru's beautiful imagery is found in this poem, e.g.

If the streams become cows and springs become the
founts of milk and ghee

The earth becomes sugar and the heart is always happy
The mountains become of gold and silver studded with
diamonds and rubies.

Even then I should sing Thy praises and never cease to
remember Thee. (Mājh ki Vār M.I)†

In *Malār ki Vār* the Guru has given in detail his views about meat-eating. An example of the pithy sayings from this *Vār* of the Guru, tending to become proverbs, is given below :

There is friendship between beauty and lust, a relation
between hunger and savour.

† *Ādi Granth*, page 141.

The greedy is one with wealth and the sleepy enjoys a narrow place like cushions.

The anger barks and is led to misery; the blind anger chatters.

The silence is golden, saith Nanak, and without Name the mouth is unholy.

(Malār kī Vār Mahla I)†

† *Ādi Granth*, page 1288.

Chapter II

THE AGE OF GURU NANAK

Guru Nanak lived in the second half of the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century. During his four journeys, he travelled hundreds of *Yojanas* towards the east, west, north and south. He crossed the Indian borders several times and went to foreign countries of varying cultures in order to expound his universal message.

We will consider below the prevailing conditions in India in the period under review.

Political Conditions

Before the birth of Guru Nanak in A.D. 1469, India had been ruled by several Muslim dynasties. The armed might of the Hindus had been broken by Qutb-ud-Din Aibak, the first king of the Slave dynasty in 1193 in the battle of Narain. Several efforts were made to exterminate Hinduism. "Tens of thousands of temples were destroyed and millions of Hindus butchered."¹ Muslim historians have talked of this butchery with great gusto. There was great religious intolerance on the part of the conquerors and the vanquished people suffered heavily. There were forcible conversions. Those Hindus,

1. *Afghanistan* by Lt.-General Sir George Macmann.

who did not accept Islam, had to live under the pressure of severe taxes and were subjected to Muslim Laws. The cruelties of Muslim kings before the birth of Guru Nanak were recorded in several chronicles, for example, in *Tarikh-i-Dāūdi* (translated by Elliott), *Twarikh-i-Illahi* by Amir Khusro, *Kamilu-t-Twarikh* by Ibn Asir, *Taj-ul-Ma'asir* by Hasan Nizami Naishapuri, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-ul Siraj, *Tajziyat-ul-Amsar wa Tajriyat-ul-Asar* by Abdulla Wassaf etc.

In 1469, when Guru Nanak was born, Delhi kingdom was being ruled by Behlol Lodhi (1451—89), who was the founder of the Lodhi dynasty and who had overthrown the tottering Sayyid dynasty. The territory under the Delhi Sultanate “included the Punjab, the Doab, Jaunpur, Oudh, a part of Bihar, Tirhut and the country between the Sutlej and Bundhelkand”.¹ Behlol was a wise ruler. According to a Muslim chronicler, “In his social meetings he never sat on a throne, would not allow his nobles to stand; and during his public audiences he did not occupy the throne, but seated himself upon a carpet”.² Behlol was succeeded by Sikandar Lodhi (1489—1517), who adopted a policy of religious persecution. Guru Nanak was out of his teens, when Sikandar ascended the throne. It is said about this king: “Wherever he went, Hindu temples were destroyed and mosques erected on their site. . . He was a bigot, and his zeal is shown

1. *India Since 1526* by V.D. Mahajan.

2. Quoted from *History of India* by N. K. Sinha and A. C. Banerjee.

in his treatment of Hindus and Hindu shrines".¹ After Sikandar, Ibrahim Lodhi (1517—1526) came to the throne. He was a weak Sultan. His actual position has been described by Erskine in the following manner : "The monarchy was a congeries of nearly independent principalities, *jagirs* and provinces, each ruled by a hereditary chief or by a zamindar or a delegate from Delhi".² His overbearing temper estranged his nobles. The Governor of the Punjab, Daulat Khan Lodhi, began his intrigues with Babur. He invited him to occupy the throne of Delhi. Ultimately Babur met Ibrahim Lodhi in the field of Panipat and gained a decisive victory. He established the Mughal rule in India.

An account of the invasion of Babur appears in the following verses of Guru Nanak :

1. He (Babur) hath rushed on from Kabul with the marriage-party of sins and accumulates wealth by force, O Lalo !

Both the modesty and piety have hidden themselves,
and falsehood is the presiding authority, O Lalo !

The Qazis and Brahmans have no say and the devil
recites the mantras of marriage, O Lalo ! . . .

(Tilang M.I.)†

-
1. *A History of India* by J. C. Powell-Price.
 2. *History of India under Babur and Humayun* by W. Erskine.

† *Ādi Granth*, page 722.

2. With the help of Khorasan, Hindustan was frightened.
The blame lies with us and not the Creator, Who hath
sent the Mughal (invader) as the angel of death.

(Āsā M. I.)†

3. The heads on which the hair-plaits are beautifully
arranged, with vermillion on the parting line,

These heads are sheared by scissors, the dust rises to the
necks.

The dwellers of palaces now do not find the company
of their husbands.

When they were married, their husbands looked graceful
by their sides,

They were brought in palanquins studded with ivory . . .

Their youth and wealth both became their enemies,
they had enamoured them,

The messengers were ordered to rape them . . .

Why should one get punishment, if one thinks before-
hand ?

The kings had lost sense in merriment, entertainment
and pleasure.

The word of Babur went round and the young prince
could get no food.

Some had lost the time of prayer and some could not
worship;

Without the sacred floor, how could the Hindu women
bathe and instal *tilaks* ?

Previously they did not remember Ram, now they
cannot utter His Name . . .

(Āsā M.I.)††

4. On account of this wealth many were destroyed, many
were in miserable plight.

† *Ādi Granth*, page 360.

†† *Ādi Granth*, page 417.

It is not acquired without sins, it does not accompany the dying.

When the Creator Himself gives misery, He takes away all the virtues.

When they heard the Mīr (Babur) rushing on, crores of pīrs (religious leaders) tried to stop him;

The houses, the palaces and pacca mansions were burnt, the young men were cut into pieces and thrown about.

No Mughal became blind, none performed the miracle. A battle took place between Mughals and Pathans, the sword was swung in the fight;

The former discharged the matchlocks and the latter provoked the elephants.

They certainly die, O brother ! whose scrip is torn in the court of the Lord.

Some were Hindu women, others were Turk women, the women of *Bhats* (bards) and *Thakurs* (lords);

The robes of some were torn from head to foot, the dwelling of some was the cremation ground;

Those whose beautiful husbands did not come home, how did they pass the night ? . . . (Āsā M. I.)†

With the onslaught of Babur's forces, not only the Hindus were routed, but also the Afghans, who had ruled the country for a long time. Guru Nanak has depicted in the above verses the position of both the Hindus and Pathans.

As Dr. Ishwari Prasad has written, "India was a congeries of states at the opening of the sixteenth century and likely to be the easy prey of an invader who had the strength and will to attempt her

† *Ādi Granth*, page 417.

conquest". The other states that existed at that time were the Muslim states of Khandesh, Kashmir, Gujarat, Bengal and Sind and the Hindu states of Mewar, Vijayanagar and Orissa.

Guru Nanak calls the kings of *Kaliyuga* as butchers, who butchered their subjects, as lions, who pounced upon their poor wards along with their officials, who were like dogs. "The greed was the king and sin his minister. The falsehood was the captain." Bhai Gurdas, a prominent Sikh, less than a century after Guru Nanak, depicted the political conditions of the age in the following manner :

The *Kaliyuga* hath come with a dog-mouth and eats carcasses, O Lord;

The kings are the sinners; the fence itself has begun to destroy the field.

The subjects are ignorant and blind; their speech is full of lies,

The disciples play at musical instruments and the *Gurus* (religious preceptors) dance in several ways; O brother ! The adherents sit in their houses and the Guru goes to visit them;

The *Qādis* (Judges) accept bribes and take wrong decisions,

The love of man and woman is based upon the procurement of money, the source may be any;

The sin hath been let loose everywhere in the world.

(Vār I, Pauṛī 30)

It is quite clear from the above stanza that *Qādis* (*Qāzis*), who were responsible for administering justice and *Muftis*, who helped *Qādis* in

expounding the Law, had become corrupt and thus there was no justice. Not only there was political degradation, there was also moral degeneration.

Social Conditions

There were two distinct societies, which were culturally far away from each other viz. the Hindu society representing Indian culture and the Muslim society representing the Semitic culture. Muslims, being conquerors, had the upper hand. But they had apparently three strata of society i.e. the upper, the middle and the lower. The upper class included royalty, high officers and landlords. They led an idle and luxurious life. They took a lion's share from the earnings of poor people. They were assisted in their booty by the middle-class people who also led an easy life. Guru Nanak has called the upper class people as lions and the middle-class assistants as dogs. Says the great Guru :

The kings are lions, their officials like dogs who disturb the restful people.

The officials are like nails (of kings) which make wounds,

(The remnants of the prey)—the blood and liver are licked like dogs. (Vār Malār M. I.)*

Why should we talk ill of her, who gives birth to kings. (Vār Āsā M. I.)

The kings had large *harems* with a bevy of beautiful ladies meant to satisfy their lust. There was a great

* *Ādi Granth*, page 1288.

deal of degeneration in the social set-up. The idle rich masters possessed large numbers of serfs, who toiled for them incessantly. The dancers and prostitutes also flourished in this regime. Two main divisions in Muslim society were based on religion. Some were *Shiyas* and others were *Sunnis*.

Hindu society, which was divided into four major castes, had to bear the brunt of Muslim oppression and tyranny. In Hindu society, the idea of a common brotherhood was lost with the institution of castes. The Brahmin considered himself supreme over Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The Shudra was highly exploited by *Dvijas*. On the one hand, he was suppressed by the higher castes; and on the other hand Muslims treated him as a Hindu. He was doubly exploited.

The Hindu was an idol-worshipper, whereas the Muslim was an idol-breaker. The peeling of the bells in Hindu temples became infrequent on account of the despotic Muslim rule in India. Thousands of temples were desecrated and were turned into mosques. Bhai Gurdas has portrayed this helpless state of Hindus in the following manner :

Temples were pulled down and mosques were constructed at their sites.

The poor were massacred like cows; sin spread over the earth.

(Bhai Gurdas, Vār I, Pauṛī 20)

While giving a description of both the societies, Bhai Gurdas says :

There are four castes of Hindus and four sects of Muslims in the world.

Jealousy and ego result in mutual bickerings and use of force.

The Ganges and Banaras belong to Hindus and Mecca and Kaaba belong to Muslims.

The Muslims perform *Sunnat* and the Hindus wear the sacred thread and instal a mark on the forehead.

The Hindus name God as *Rām* and Muslims as *Rahim*. The Lord is the same but both the communities have gone astray.

They have forgotten *Vedas* and *Kitebs* and have fallen into the Satan's snare of greed and worldly attachment.

The truth has been left over. The *Brahmins* and *Maulanas* quarrel and destroy themselves.

They cannot thus escape transmigration.

(Bhai Gurdas, Vār I, Pauṛī 21)

The Hindus considered the woman a very inferior thing, a sort of possession and a device for sexual pleasure. She was kept in *pardah* and within the four walls of the house. The freedom given to women in Vedic times and her status in society of that age was utterly forgotten. Guru Nanak could not tolerate this sad plight of Indian women; therefore he said :

Why should we talk ill of her who gives birth to kings ?

(Vār Āsā, M.I.)*

Marriage was performed at a very early age. The practice of *Sati* was prevalent in some sections of the Hindu society. The woman depended on her

* *Ādi Granth*, page 473.

husband or other male relatives in both Hindu and Muslim societies.

The people, in general, had lost all the virtues and had got demoralised. Guru Nanak says :

The subjects are blind without knowledge; they are like corpses, full of fire;

The wise ones dance and play on musical instruments, they decorate their bodies.

They make loud conversations and sing their thoughts about the heroes.

The foolish Pandits have the wisdom of arguments and love the accumulation (of wealth).

The virtuous ones practise virtues but get no reward; they ask for the gate of salvation.

They are called ascetics, but do not know the method; they leave their hearths and homes.

Every one is perfect by himself, none calls himself deficient.

The weight of honour is put in the balance, saith Nanak, and then by weighing in it, it is known what man is worth.

(Vār Āsā, M.I.)*

The Muslim rulers exploited the Hindu subjects to such an extent that the Hindus adopted the dress and language of their rulers. They even submitted to the levy of tax on their gods and shrines :

The Primal Being is called Allah and the Sheikhs (Muslims) have their day.

The temples and gods are taxed, this is the law of the land;

* *Ādi Granth*, page 469.

The vessel (for ablution), the announcement (by Mullah), the prayer and prayer-mat have gained importance and God (*Banwari*) is said to wear blue clothes.

All the persons in your homes are addressed as '*Mian*' and your language has changed.

(Basant Hindol M.I.)†

Religious Conditions

The main Indian religion before the advent of Islam was Hinduism, which was divided into various cults. Religion had degenerated into ritualism and formalism. With the advent of Islam in India, the religious freedom of the Hindus was lost. The fanatic *Mullas* were instrumental in the desecration of temples, the levy of tax on religious places and forcible conversions. "The great contribution of the Muslim royal dynasties of Delhi was the introduction and propagation of Islam in India."†† The rejection of caste system, idol-worship and untouchability and propagation of universal brotherhood and unity of God by Islam threw a great challenge to the protagonists of Hinduism, who felt a strong impact of new ideas. Several saints and religious reformers came forward throughout India in order to safeguard the Hindu society. "With some difference in details these reformers were exponents of the liberal *Bhakti* cult or single-minded direct devotion and love to the One. They denounced idol-worship and caste system, preached the fundamental equality and basic oneness

† *Ādi Granth*, page 1191.

†† *Evolution of Indian Culture* by B. N. Lunia, M.A. Lt., II edition, pp. 442-3.

of all religions and the unity of Godhead, advocated the monotheistic faith, protested against the domination of the priestly class, opposed the complicated elaborate, and excessive ritualism and formalities of religion and emphasised simple devotion, faith and puritan life as the means of deliverance or salvation for all persons."¹

The religious degeneration of the times has been portrayed by Guru Nanak in the following verses :

The Muslim Judge (*Qādi*) tells lies and accepts bribe,
The Brahmin bathes, but kills beings,

The yogi is blind and does not know the practice of
yoga,

All the three are bondage for leading astray.²

(Dhanāsari, M.I.)

1. *Ibid*, p. 443.

2. *Ādi Granth*, page 662.

Chapter III
**GURU NANAK'S CONCEPT OF
ULTIMATE REALITY**

Guru Nanak, the great preceptor, talked about both the matter and the spirit. He saw around him the sport of *Prakriti* or Nature and also viewed the *lilā* of the supra-physical energy pervading the whole universe. For him every *Jīva* has dual personality, one with relation to the matter and the other with relation to the spirit, i.e., the physical and the spiritual. But for him the spiritual aspect was most significant, because the matter changed or dropped in the gradual evolution of the spirit.

In this chapter, we intend to penetrate into the domain of the spirit as revealed in the works of the Guru. This domain is real and not speculative. We have to open our inner eyes for a view of this meta-physical world. The fundamental enquiry about this world will be regarding the nature of the ultimate reality.

Mūl Mantra

An enquiry into the nature of the ultimate reality takes us first of all to the study of *Mūl Mantra* or 'the sacred formula'. The very first word of this formula i.e. *Ik Oamkāra* is significant. It conveys the unity of Brahman and also its two aspects, i.e., the unmanifested (*Nirguna*) and manifested (*Saguna*).

The text and translation of the *Mūl Mantra* is given below :

IK OAMKĀRA—The one Oamkāra (manifested as well as unmanifested Brahman)

SATNĀM —His Name is TRUTH

KARTĀ PURKH—A PURUSHA who is the creator

NIRBHAU —Without any Fear

NIRVAIR —Without any Enmity

AKĀL MŪRAT—A Being whom Death cannot assail

AJŪNĪ —Unborn

SAIBHAM —Self-existent

GURPRASAD —With the grace of the Guru (preceptor).

The *Mūl Mantra* given above presents the nature of the ultimate reality in a nutshell. But we shall elaborate the same from the works of the Guru.

Brahman as the Divine Principle

Brahman is True and Pure Being. He was true in the beginning; He was True in the beginning of the ages. He is True in the present and shall be True in future.* The True Brahman has created the universe, which is also real like Him. The Guru says,† “Thy regions and universes are true. The

* Ād sac, jugād sac . . . (Japji—p. 1).

† Sace tere khand . . . (Āsā ki Vār, M.I., p. 463).

spheres and material worlds are true. All Thy works and thoughts are true. Thy court and Thy order are true. Thy judgment is true. Thy grace and sign are true. Lakhs and crores praise Thee, O True Lord. Thy might is true. Thy praises are true. O True King, Thy *Prakriti* is True. They are true, who remember the True Lord, saith Nanak. Only those who suffer birth and death are unsound”.

Brahman is immortal and fearless. He is unknowable, infinite, unapproachable, beyond the senses, immortal, uninfluenced by *Karmas*, casteless, unborn, self-existent, without any attachment, illusion, form and colour, above all relations and instincts and beyond *māyā*.¹ He is without any equal and actually there is none other than Him.² All the *Devas* or gods are His Creation.³ It is His Light which shines throughout the universe.⁴

Brahman is of the nature of intelligence or pure knowledge. He is pure consciousness. He acts consciously and controls the working of the universe as a conscious power.⁵ He is free from all imperfections (*Pūran Purusha*) and is endowed with all auspicious qualities.⁶ He is imperishable, He has neither

-
- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Alakh apār agam | (Sorathi M.I, p. 597) |
| 2. Terā Sarik ko nāhi | (Gauri Vār M. IV, p. 301) |
| 3. Nārad Sārad sewak tere | (Maru M.I, p. 1028) |
| 4. Sagli jot terā sabh koī | (Āsā M.I, p. 414) |
| 5. Nānak hukmai andar vekhai vartai tāko tāk | (Vār Āsā M. I, p. 464) |
| 6. Sabhi gun tere mai nāhi koe | (Japji, p. 4) |

any beginning (*Anādi*) nor any end (*Amar*). Everything works under His Will.¹ From His terror the wind blows, the rivers flow, the fire burns, Indra and Death do their duty, the sun and moon move along their orbits.²

Brahman is eternal and changeless.³ He is always the same (*Ik Ras*), the universal being of an absolutely homogeneous nature. He is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient. The One Brahman is present everywhere; there is none else.⁴ Wherever we see He is present there. There is no place without Him.⁵ He is all-powerful. He can make the savage animals and birds eat grass and those who are grass-eaters can eat meat according to His Will. He can create cities within seas and can merge cities in seas. If He wills, a lowly person can create a kingdom and destroy myriads of enemies. Each loaf of bread, that we eat, is received by His Grace.⁶ If He withdraws His Grace, the kings become lowly and in spite of begging do not get alms.⁷ He knows

-
1. Hukme andar sabhu ko (Japji, p. 1)
 2. Bhai vic pavanu vahai sad vāu . . . Rājā Dharam duār
(Vār Āsā M.I, p. 464)
 3. Nā ohu marai na hovai sogu (Āsā M.I, p. 9)
 4. Sarbam sēcā eku hai dūsar nāhi koe
(Dhanāsari M.I, p. 60)
 5. Jahi dekhā tahi rahiā samāi (Dhanāsari M.I, p. 60)
 6. Sīhā bājā cargā kūhiā enā . . .
(Mājhi ki Vār M. I, p. 144)
 7. Nadri upathi je karai sultānā ghāu karāidā
(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 472)

everybody¹ and whatever is created by Him is known to Him.² He is the king of knowledge (*Giān Rāo*—359).

Brahman is bliss. He is the source of bliss (*Ānand Mūl*).³ His form is bliss.⁴ He is *Saibham* or *Svayambhu* or self-existent. He is the triad, subject, object and the mover. He is the wooden tablet, the pen and the writing.⁵ He is associated with *Māyā*, and is compared with a magician or a juggler⁶ who creates his illusory world for a short while.

Brahman is true, Good and Beautiful.⁷ He is free from all difference and two-fold characteristics cannot belong to him. The duality is all ignorance.⁸

Names, forms and symbols of Brahman

There are innumerable names of Brahman specifying his powers or qualities. The Guru says, "Many are Thy names, infinite Thy forms, none can count

-
1. Tū jānoi sabhsai de laisahi jind kavāu
(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 463)
 2. Tū janahi jin upāisi sabhu khel tumāti
(Mājh kī Vār M. I, p. 138)
 3. Anand mūlu anāth adhāri
(Dhanāsari M. I, p. 685)
 4. Anand rūpa anūpa sarūpā guri pūre dekhāiā
(Mārū M. I, p. 1041)
 5. Āpe patti kalam āpi upari lekhi bhi tū
(Malār kī Vār M. I, p. 1291)
 6. Natūai sāng banāiā bāji sansārā
(Āsā M. I, p. 422)
 7. Sat suhān sadā man chāo . . .
(Japji)
 8. Dūje bhāi agiān duhelā . . .
(Gaurī M. I, p. 226)

Thy qualities".¹ But Brahman does not take birth. All the gods or *Avataras* (incarnations) are created by Brahman; therefore they are not to be considered as Brahman. There is no doubt that the whole creation is the manifestation of Brahman. All that we see or hear is Brahman. This is *Sagun* Brahman but the Brahman whom we have to dedicate ourselves according to the Guru is *Nirguna* (without any qualities). He has no form and colour; therefore He is without any symbols. He cannot be comprehended by any imagined symbol.

The Guru used several current names of God in his compositions e.g. *Madhusūdan*, *Murārī*, *Dāmodar* etc., but he never attached any significance to these names. They were used for the convenience and understanding of the people. In order to bring home to the common man the omnipotency of the Lord, the Guru referred to their mythological stories describing the victories of God over demons.

The Guru, while discarding all other symbols, considered Brahman's Name as the only outward symbol and the only mode of contact with Him. The most important names according to him are *Oamkār* and *Sat*.

Brahman is *Akshara*. Brahman is light. Brahman is the highest Person (*Purusha*). He is compared to a fig tree, whose roots grow upwards and whose branches grow downward.² The city of Brahman is the body and He lives in the lotus of the heart.

1. Tere nām anekā rūp anantā . . . (Āsā M. I, p. 358)

2. Uradh mūl jisū sākḥ talāhā . . . (Gūjri M. I, p. 503)

Oneness of Brahman

Brahman is one without a second.¹ All the regions, spheres and worlds are contained in Him. Both unity and diversity are true of Him because whenever it is His Will, He becomes many and whenever He so desires, He again becomes One. He is the bright immortal person (*Akāl Purusha*) in every thing. Being only One, He is the sovereign of all the creation,² God of gods. Having no equal. He is without any fear (*Nirbhau*) and without any enmity (*Nirvair*). He is seen as manifold through nescience.

Brahman and the World

Brahman is the creator of the world. He is both the material as well as efficient cause of the world. He is the source of all beings and the support of the universe. He has placed the sky without any prop. He is the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer. Everything is born from Him and is finally absorbed in Him.³ He is the seed of the tree of creation.

The Guru has used the word *Qudrat* (Nature) for the creation. He addresses the Lord : "All is Thy *Qudrat* (creation). Thou art the Creator."⁴

-
- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Eko hai bhai eko hai | (Āsā M. I, p. 350) |
| Ekas te sabh opat hoī | (Gaurī M. I, p. 223) |
| 2. Sagal bhavan terī māīā moh . . . nāthā devā dev | |
| | (Basant M. I, p. 1169) |
| 3. Jiste upaje tiste binse . . . | (Sri Raga M. I, p. 20) |
| 4. Qudrati dissai Qudrati suniai Qudrati bhau sukh sāru . . . | |
| | (Vār Āsā M. I, p. 464) |

Qudrat is the same as *Prakriti* or *māyā*. Whatever we see or hear is *Qudrat*, and the same is said of Brahman; therefore, *Qudrat* is the manifestation of Brahman. The Guru says: "Brahman is Himself *Kavalā* (Lakshmi) or *māyā* and Himself her Lord". It is a strange phenomenon that the lady (*māyā*) is within the Lord and the Lord is within the lady.¹

The world is a mere sport of Brahman (*Līlā*, *Khel*). It is like a theatrical performance being played during the darkness of the night.² In this *līlā*, Brahman, as creator and dispenser, acts with a view to the merits and demerits of the individual souls.³ Before the creation of the world, Brahman is *Shūnya* (*Sunn*) or non-being who is absorbed in abstract meditation. He is different from the world in this aspect, but becomes associated with it after its creation.

There are unlimited regions, spheres and universes in the abode of the True Brahman.⁴ The *māyā* of the Lord has been depicted by the Guru as a hungry and angry woman who has devoured the whole world including the chief gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

-
1. Purkh mahi nār nār mahi purkhā . . . (Rāmkalī M. I, p. 879)
 2. Khel tamāsā dhumdūkāre . . . (Mārū M. I, p. 1023)
 3. Karmī karmī hoī bicār . . . (Japji, p. 7)
 4. Tithai khand mandal varbhand . . . ant na ant. (Japji, p. 8)

The Brahman and the individual soul

The *Atman* (*purusha*) or the soul (self) is one with Brahman. The soul is within the highest self and the highest self is within the soul.¹ Both are identical. If the self is known, the highest self is also realized. Just as the soul is related to body, the highest self is related to the universe. The soul and body both belong to Brahman.

Because of its individuality the soul appears different from Brahman, though it is a part and parcel of Brahman. Both matter and the individual soul are real constituents of Brahman's nature.² Whereas the soul is *Purusha*, the Brahman is '*Karta Purakh*', '*Akal Purakh*', '*Adi Purakh*', '*Niranjan Purakh*', '*Sat Purakh*'. Brahman is the internal ruler of the *Purushas*.

The individual soul has its limitations, and because of these limitations, it cannot understand Brahman fully. The imperfections of the soul due to its association with mind and intellect are only its own failings; Brahman is perfect. The soul is saved by meditation on Brahman. The released soul enjoys supreme bliss, which is an attribute of Brahman.

The Higher and the Lower Brahman

Although Brahman is One, it has two aspects, the one without attributes (*Trigunatīta*) or *Nirguna* and

1. *Ātam mahi Rām Rām mahi Ātam . . .*

(Bhairo M. I, p. 1153)

2. *Jiu pindu sabhu tisdā . . .*

(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 465)

the other with attributes or *Sargun*. Guru Nanak has depicted the two aspects of the Lord in his poem entitled *Aarti* wherein he says, "Thou hast a thousand eyes but without eyes Thou art, Thou hast a thousand forms, but without any form Thou art, Thou hast a thousand feet, but without any feet Thou art, Thou hast a thousand odours, but without any odour Thou art. This act of Thine hast fascinated me".¹ The Lord without any form, colour or lineage is called Higher Brahman or *Para Brahman*, but his other aspect of name, form and colour is known as Lower Brahman or *Ishvara*. In one of his hymns the Guru has addressed *Ishvara* thus :

"Thine eyes are radiant and teeth exquisite, Thy nose is stately and hair long. Thy body is golden".²

This description is metaphorical conveying only a bit of the beauty of the Lord. However, the Guru has clearly asserted at several places in his compositions that the Lord is indescribable.

The syllable AUM which is Upanishadic in origin and has been used by the Guru in the beginning of the *Mūl Mantra* is suggestive of the higher and the lower Brahman. The lower Brahman is associated with *Māyā* and from this association are born Brahma (the power of creation), Vishnu (the power of preservation) and Shiva (the power of destruction).³ The lower Brahman is the vital

1. Sahas tav nain nan nain hai tohe kau sahas
murati nanā ek tohi . . . (Dhanāsari M. I, p. 663)
2. Tere banke loini dant risālā. (Vadhans M. I, p. 567)
3. Ekā māi jugat . . . (Japji, p. 7)

principle in all creatures and is worshipped and meditated. But the lower or qualified Brahman is fundamentally one with the higher or unqualified Brahman. Because of this oneness, the lower Brahman can be designated by the word 'Brahman'. He is the Self of all.

Before the creation, the Higher Brahman is absorbed in abstract meditation. When it was His Will, He, as Ishvara, created the Universe in association with māyā. The soul's aim is the realization of Higher Brahman—this fact has been emphasised by the Guru.

A hymn

The Guru's concept of ultimate reality can be well understood from the following free translation of one of his hymns.* "He is Truth, there is none else. He is the creator as well as the destroyer—Make us live as Thou wilt. We have to obey Thy orders—He creates and destroys and gives due work to every one. He thinks, gives virtues and puts on the right path. He is the knower and the seer. He creates and enjoys. He Himself is air, water and fire. He Himself brings union. He Himself

* Sācā sac soi avaru nā koi

Jini sirjī tin hi phuni goi

... ..

Āp nirālam gur gam giānā, jo disai tujh mahi samānā

Nanaku nic bhikhīā dar jācai mai dījai Nām vadāi he.

(Mārū, Solhe M. I, p. 1020)

is moon, sun and perfection. He Himself is knowledge, contemplation and the warrior-like enlightener. Those who meditate upon the True Lord do not fall in the noose of Yama. He Himself is male and female. He Himself is the chautar play (the world) and chessmen (the *Jīvas*). He Himself plays in the arena of the world and Himself evaluates. He Himself is flower, fruit and tree. He Himself is earth and ocean. He Himself is fish and tortoise, cause and effect. His beauty cannot be cognised (described). He is day and night and Himself is pleased with the words of the enlightener. He is from the beginning of the *Yugas*; His word and order continuously resound in every heart. He Himself is a queer and invaluable jewel. He Himself is the judge of exact weight. He himself is the examining jeweller and the bargainer. He Himself is the bow and the arrow. He Himself is sagacious. He is the speaker and listener and maker of the whole show. Air the preceptor, water the father, earth the mother (associated through its belly) with day and night as the male and female nurses begin the game of the world. He Himself is the fish and the net. He Himself is the cow and the protector. His (Thy) light is within all the *Jīvas* of the world according to His orders. He Himself is *Yogi* (unaffected by the world) and *Bhogi* (indulging in worldly pleasures). He Himself is impassioned, the supreme unifier. He Himself is indescribable, formless and fearless Brahman in abstract meditation. All the divisions

of creation and speech merge in Him. Whatever we see, experiences births and deaths. They are rich and true merchants, whom the preceptor has given understanding by His grace. The true and perfect Guru gives the understanding of the *word*, which is full of all the powers of the True Lord, who is beyond approach, carefree and without greed. Birth and Death have gone mad (ceased to exist) for them who enjoy the continuous flow of the nectar of the *Word* within themselves. He Himself is the giver of boons, is released, satiated and likes the devotion with love. He is unaffected and His knowledge can be obtained from the Guru (preceptor). Whatever we see merges in Him. Nanak, the lowly, begs on His door for His exalted Name.

Chapter IV

ETHICS OF GURU NANAK

The religion of Guru Nanak is the religion of householders. He has totally rejected the division of *varnas* (castes) and *ashramas*¹ (stages of life) enjoined by Hindu shastras. For him none is born great, none is inferior to the other; the walls and prejudices created in society are only man-made. He advocates the removal of all social barriers between man and man, man and woman. The Guru's ideology has no place for asceticism and passivity. Activity is the keynote of the Guru's philosophy and the basis of his ethics.

The ethics and religion of Guru Nanak are complementary. They are the body and spirit of his thought. For a spiritual discipline, the code of conduct is a necessity. The ethics is the basis of the spiritual edifice. Unless the virtues are imbibed, the seeker cannot move further on the spiritual plane. A balanced combination of action, knowledge and devotion is required.

The Guru is against any kind of ritualism,²

1. Phakkar jāti phakkar nāu, sabhnā jiā ikā chāu.

(Vār Sri Rāga M. IV, p. 83)

2. Karam dharam kare . . . sabde salahi (Mārū M.I, p. 1027)

Japu tapu sanjam . . . bin sāce kiā tās (Sri Rāga M.I, p. 56)

because the final beatitude can never be obtained through rituals. In this context all rituals are useless. All paths, which do not lead to the Lord, are to be avoided. In this sense, all the godly qualities should be practised in life.

GODLY QUALITIES

Truth

God is Truth; therefore the seeker should attach the greatest importance to truth. Truth is a liquor¹ with the sugar of the Name of the Lord. When truth comes,² Truth (Lord) is realised. But great patience³ is required for the realization of Truth. The followers of māyā do not like Truth.⁴ Without the wealth of truth none can obtain peace.⁵ Those who recognise truth, they are always happy,⁶ but for this the grace of the Lord is necessary.⁷ Truth is higher⁸

1. Sacu sarā guṛ bāhrā jis vici sacā nāu
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 15)
2. Sacu milai sacu ūpaje sacu mahi sacu samāi
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 18)
3. Sacu milai santokhiā Hari japi ekai bhāi
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 18)
4. Sākat sac nā bhāvai kure kūrī pāi
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 18)
5. Jinā rāsi nā sacu hai kio tinā sukhū hoi
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 22)
6. Jinī sacu pachāniā te sukhie jug cāri
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 55)
7. Nadari kare sacu pālai binu nāvai kiā sāk
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 55)
8. Sacahu orai sabhu ko upari sacu ācār
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 62)

Fearlessness

Friendliness

1. Suci hovai ta sacu pāiai (Vār Āsā M. I, p. 472)

2. Mukh jhūṭhe jhūṭh bolnā kio kar sūcā hoi
(Sṛī Rāga M. I, p. 56)

3. Bhai te nirbhau pāiai jisdā ant nā pārāvār
(Malār ki Vār M. I, p. 1288)

Bhai vic nīrbhau pāīā ta sahajai kai ghari āīā.
(Sorathi M. I, p. 599)

Bhai māne nirbhau meri māi (Basant M. I, p. 1187)

4. Mandā mūl nā kicai . . . (Vār Āsā M. I. p. 474)

Mandā kise nā ākhi jhagrā pāvanā
(Vadhansu M. I, p. 566)

therefore they are to be avoided. Ego flares up inimical thoughts. It is a serious malady,¹ therefore the seeker has to remain at a distance from this evil in order to keep up his spiritual health.

Love

God is love; therefore the seeker should always love the creation of the Lord, if he has at heart the love of the Lord. One who considers others like himself is honoured in the court of the Lord.² He never hates anybody. Love and devotion are complementary; therefore love is an essential requisite for a devotee of the Lord.

Purity

God is pure; therefore the seeker should remove all impurities. Everybody, except the Lord and his accepted devotees, is impure.³ The purity can be achieved in the company of the preceptor (who is like a touchstone).⁴

Justice

God is just; therefore the seeker should avoid any

-
1. Haumai diragh rog hai (Vār Āsā M. I, p. 466)
 2. Nanak tā kau milai vadāi āp pachānai sarab jiā
(Siddh Goshtā, p. 940)
 3. Mere Prabh bhāvani se ūjale sabh mail bharijai
(Mārū M. I, p. 1012)
 4. Mailā ūjalu ta thiai pāras sangi bhijai
(Mārū M. I, p. 1012)

kind of injustice. The justice of God is based on truth;¹ therefore the seeker is required to base his life on truth and justice.

Generosity and Graciousness

God is the giver of everything. He gives to every *Jīva* irrespective of his merits in his present life. The giver gives, but the receiver is sometimes tired.² The seeker should always aim at giving and serving others without expecting anything as remuneration. This is called *Karma Yoga*. God is gracious also, besides being generous. The seeker can exhibit graciousness by forgiving the erroneous and the sinner.

Sweetness

God is sweet; therefore the seeker should also be sweet in word, deed and actions.

The qualities of God are innumerable. He is the bestower of qualities, but there is none who can in turn give any quality to God.³ We have given only a few above, which the seeker can practise in life.

The Guru believes that there are two kinds of actions, *i.e.*, good and bad. The doer cannot escape

1. Vaddi vadiāi jā sacu niāu (Vār Āsā M. I, p. 463)
2. Dedā de laide thakī pāhi (Japji, p. 2)
3. Nānak nirguṇ guṇu kare guṇvantiā guṇ dehi
Tehā koi nā sujhai je tisu guṇ koi kare (Japji, p. 2)

from reaping the fruits of his actions. He has to undergo punishment for his bad actions.¹ If He rules the world with high-handedness and drifts away from the path of God, he will go to hell quite naked and will repent for his evils.²

The Charvaka hedonism has been rejected outright by the Guru. All the worldly pleasures enjoyed by our senses end in pain and misery. The pleasures create disease and the ensuing pain becomes the remedy.³ It proves a blessing in disguise, because it puts us on the right path. The bodily and mental ills are cured with the expert advice. The Guru comes to our rescue.

It is necessary to discriminate between the 'good' and the 'pleasant'. The 'good' is a pointer to spiritual life and the 'pleasant' to the mundane. The 'good' leads to self-realization which is the result of self-restraint (*Sanjam*). Self-restraint may not be misunderstood for self-mortification as against self-indulgence. Self-mortification has been rejected by the Guru. Self-indulgence to a certain limit is not bad.

1. Mandā cangā āpanā āpe hī kitā pāvanā
(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 472)
2. Cija Karan man bhāvde Hari bujhan nahi hāriā
Kar phurmāis khāiā vekh mahāl te maraṇ visāriā,
(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 472)
Nanga dojak cāliā tā ḍissai kharā darāvaṇā.
Kar auguṇu pachotāvaṇā (Vār Āsā M. I, p. 471)
3. Dukh dārū sukhu rog bhiā (Vār Āsā M. I, p. 9)

Lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego are bad in themselves, but their rightful use helps in spiritual advancement.

The thought, word and deed are the three significant factors which determine the moral standard of an individual. The thoughts which arise in the mind manifest themselves either through speech or through bodily action; therefore the consideration of the moral standard rests on the behaviour exhibited through the body, speech and mind. The virtue and righteousness exhibited through body, speech and mind is known as *Dharma* and evil and unrighteousness is called *Adharma*. The Guru has laid emphasis on adopting *Dharma*¹ and discarding off *Adharma*. We shall take up the discussion of the behaviour of body, speech and mind, one by one.

Body

While addressing the body, the Guru says : Thou art careless, O body ! Thou thinkest that thou art immortal, but this world is a mere sport (of the Lord). Thou practiseth greed and falsehood and overburdenst thyself. That is why I have seen thee humiliated like the ashes on the earth. Listen to my advice. Thou wilt not be born again and only the good actions will keep thee company, my *jīva* ! I say unto thee, my body ! listen to my advice. Thou calumniatest others and indulgest in false tattling. Thou seest the wives of others

1. Kūrahu kare vināsu dharme tagīai (Vār Gūjri M. V, p. 518)

stealthily, O jiva ! and practiseth theft and evils. When the Soul leaves Thee, thou remainest behind (in solitude), like a deserted woman. O body ! Thou remained in dreams, what good thou hast done. When something was stolen, thou liked it. Neither thou received any respect in this world nor any honour in the other and just wasted thy precious birth. I underwent great misery O Baba (Elder one) ! No one pays any attention to me. The finest horses, gold, silver, stocks of fine clothes accompanied none and were left behind. Foolish body ! I have tasted all the sweets and fruits, the sweetest is the Name of the Lord. Having laid the foundation, the wall was raised, but the same became a heap of ashes. The blind gathers (the wealth) and does not share with others, thinking that it was his own. But it must be borne in mind that it belongs to none, like the wealth of Lanka (Ceylon) . . .¹

The above-mentioned thoughts of the Guru lay bare the reality of the body. The prominent vices connected with the body are : cruelty towards others in the act of the accumulation of wealth, the theft of wealth belonging to others, and sexual hunger. The body is quite careless about the real objective of its birth in this world. It passes the night in sleeping

1. Amrit kâjā rahai sukhālī bāji ihu sansāro

Labu lobhu mucu kuṛu kamāvahi bahutu uthāvahi bhāro

Kūjā mevā mai sabh kichu cākhiā iku amritu nāmu tumārā
de de niv divāl usārī bhas mandar kī dherī

Sance sancī nā deī kis hī andhu jānai sabh merī

Soin Lankā soīn māī sampai kisai nā kerī,

(Gaurī Ceti M. I, p. 154-55)

and the day in enjoying, and thus the most precious opportunity in this birth is wasted.¹

The first virtue connected with body is *Ahimsa* or non-injury to living beings. The Guru is quite emphatic on this virtue. He says, "Truthful is he, who abides by the true advice : who *shows* mercy towards the *jīvas* and gives, in charity, to the needy".²

In order to rise higher on the spiritual plane, one should know within himself the significance of mercy towards all and treat all the *jīvas* like himself.³ The Guru has mentioned four fires : violence, attachment, greed and anger.⁴ The first place has been given to *Himsa* or violence; therefore a man of God forgets and forsakes violence, ego and greed.⁵ Violence is the result of ego, which is not liked by the Lord.

Violence is said to flare up because of three things, i.e., wealth, woman and property.⁶ One wants

1. Raini gavāi soi ke divasu gavāiā khāi
(Gauri Bairagani M. I, p. 156)
2. Sacu tā par jānai jā sikh saci lei
diā jānai jia ki kichu pun dān karei (Vār Āsā M. I, p. 468)
3. Jivat marai tā sabhu kichu sūjhe antari jānai sarab diā
Nānak tā kau milai vadāi āp pachānai sarab jiā.
(Siddh Goshta, p. 940)
4. Hans hetu lobhu kopu cāre nadiā ag
(Mājh ki Vār M. I, p. 147)
5. Jis man mānai abhimān nā tā kau hinsā lobh
visārai (Sārang M. I, p. 1198)
6. Kari cori mai jā kich liā tā man bhalā bhāiā
(Gauri Ceti M. I, p. 155)

to usurp the wealth and property of others. He keeps an eye on other ladies. His hunger for the wealth and women of others is insatiable. In order to possess them he resorts to stealing and trespassing. But the Guru is very critical about this way of life. The thief feels pleasure in stealing and likes his profession, but he neither receives respect in this world nor in the next. He wastes his precious birth. The judge never appreciates a thief, though the thief may praise the judge. If the thief talks ill of the judge, the judge does not lose anything. No body reposes his confidence in a thief, therefore how can an action of a thief be liked ?¹

All kinds of worldly enjoyments end in misery.² They result in disease and death. All the sensual and sexual pleasures bring innumerable ills and sorrows for the enjoyer. "The fool reaps the harvest of grief from the worldly pleasures and commits sins."³ "The sexual pleasure and anger both weaken the body."⁴ The Guru says : "The desire for the wealth of others, the lust for the love of other women and calumny are poison and result in misery".⁵ For this reason the Guru advises the man of the

1. Coru salāhe citu nā bhījai, je badi kare tā tasū nā chījai,
Cor kī hāmā bhāre nā koi, cor kīa canga kio hoi.
(Dhanāsari M. I, p. 662)
2. Bahu sādahu dūkhu prāpati hovai (Mārū M. I, p. 1034)
Bhogi ko dukhu rog viāpe (Basant M. I, p. 1189)
3. Mūrah bhoge bhog dukhu sabāiā
(Mājh kī Vār M. I, p. 139)
4. Kām karodha kīā kau gālai (Rāmkalī M. I, p. 932)
5. Par dhan par nāri ratu nindā bikhu khāi dukhu pāiā
(Malār M. I, p. 1255)

world to keep away from the wealth and women of others, telling him clearly that greed and ego are poison and evil,¹ and that he should forsake fraudulent ways, calumniation, lust and anger.²

The virtuous action of the body is thus the service of others. Instead of keeping an eye on the wealth of others, one should help others from one's honestly earned income.³ The foremost activity of the body should be to work hard for the welfare of the family and society. The duty of the Head of the family is to work in order to fulfil the needs of his family and his own requirements. He should also share his earnings with the needy. The Guru says, "One should labour for one's requirements and should also give something in charity. He will recognise the way of the Lord". The help to others should be without any desire for remuneration. Charity without any expectation of reward is real charity. One should always be ready for social service for the good of humanity. The foremost aim of an ideal Sikh is the service of humanity.

Speech

It is said that the tongue can inflict a deeper wound than the sword. One word can break off the dear ones in a moment; therefore one should utter

-
1. Par dārā par dhanu par lobhā haumai bikhai bikar
(Malār M. I, p. 1255)
 2. Dust bhāu taji nind parāi kāmū karodha candār
(Malār M. I, p. 1255-56)
 3. Ghālī khāi kichū hathahu dehi
Nanak rāhu pachānahi sei. (Vār Sārang M. IV, p. 1245)

every word with care. The language should be sincere and sweet. The Guru says, "The unsavoury tongue makes the mind and body unsavoury. The harsh person is unsavoury for every body and is known as a person of harsh temperament. Such a person receives disrespect in the court of the Lord. The courtiers spit at him. He is called a fool and receives the punishment of shoes".¹ With harsh words the love dies down² and the friendship ends. Therefore the true Sikh will never talk ill of any body.³ The true knowledge teaches us this lesson. The speech, which brings us respect, is the model speech,⁴ the unsavoury speech leads us to misery. Therefore a seeker always speaks sweet words and makes his tongue sweet. He always speaks truth and never tells a lie. That tongue is pure, which repeats the True Name of the Lord.⁵ With the nectar of the Name the tongue loses all impurities.⁶ Without this nectar the tongue is always unsavoury. Such a tongue should be burnt.⁷ The fool is blind, his

-
1. Nānak phikai boliai . . . pānā lahai sajai
(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 473)
 2. Tūt pareeti gai burbola
(Dakhni Oamkār, p. 933)
 3. Kis hi mandā ākhi nā calai saci kharā saciārā he
(Mārū M. I, p. 1027)
 - Mandā kise nā ākhiāi . . .
(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 473)
 4. Jitu boliai pati pāiai so boliā parvānu (Sri Rāga M. I, p. 15)
 5. Bolahi amrit bāni rasan rasāiā jio (Dhanāsari M. I, p. 688)
 6. Bolahi sacu mithiā nahi rāi
(Gauri M. I, p. 227)
 - Jihvā sūci sēcā bol
(Rāmkalī M. I, p. 905)
 - Jihvā sūci Hari ras sēcā
(Gauri M. I, p. 224)
 7. Jihvā jalan jalāvanti nām nā japai rasāi (Sri Rāga M. I, p. 59)

tongue is not sweet, he does not follow the advice.¹ He always quarrels with others having been poisoned with *māyā*. His tongue is not imbued with the nectar of the Name of Hari, its speech is always unsavoury.

The unrighteousness with respect to speech consists in practising falsehood, tartness of expression, calumny and gossiping. All these acts stand in the way of spiritual progress. The calumny is a great sin. One who practises calumny can never attain release. He is like a counterfeit coin.² He is black-faced, his speech being full of ill-will for others. The Guru says, "The tongue is not imbued with the love of Hari. It speaks always unsavoury language. It is engaged in the calumny of saints. The animal never rises to the higher plane.³ The calumniators are enchained.⁴ They will be the dwellers of hell and gloom".⁵

The righteousness with respect to speech consists in the practice of veracity, uttering of speech for the good of humanity, sweetness of utterance and the recitation of scriptures. All these acts are done for

1. Mūrah hoe na ākhī sūjhai
Jihva rasu nahi kahai būjhai. (Āsā M. I, p. 414)
2. Aiji khote thaur nahi ghari bāhari nindak gati nahi kai
(Gūjri M. I, p. 505)
3. Jihvā rangī nahī . . . pasū bhae kade hoi na thike
(Bhairo M. I, p. 1126)
4. Nindak lāitbār mile harvāñai (Malār kī Vār M. I, p. 1288)
5. Nindā kari kari narak nivāsi . . . (Mārū M. I, p. 1013)

the good of individual soul and for the society. The recitation of scriptures is an act of faith. The sayings of the sages inspire us for higher ideals and nobler acts, thus paving the way for our spiritual enlightenment. The practice of listening and imbibing the spirit of the scriptures creates within us the sacred fear of the Lord.¹

Mind

The mind is the pivot of worldly life. It is related to intellect (*Buddhi*). The prayer of a Sikh lays emphasis on the higher plane for the intellect and lower for the mind,² because the mind is mostly attracted towards the vices. The upper plane of intellect (right thinking) will obstruct vices from entering the plane of mind, being overshadowed by it. The mind, if let loose, can play havoc, and, if kept under control, can raise us spiritually. These different states of mind have been depicted by the Guru. "Mind is the king, active with varied desires. Mind is the *Yogi*, ending separation. The mind understands the reality by singing the praises of the Lord. Such persons who have subdued the mind with the Word of the Guru are very rare".³ "The mind is *māyā* and runs everywhere. It is like a bird flying in the sky. The thief is subdued by the

1. Pothi Purān kamālai, bhau vatti itu tani pātai

(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 25)

2. Man nīva rahe mat uci rahe

(Sikh Prayer)

3. Manu rāja manu man te mānāi . . . te virle sansārā.

(Bhairo M. I, p. 1125)

Word and lives in the city of the body (like a civilised citizen) . . . The mind is the yogi, the mind is the enjoyer, the mind is a fool, the mind is charitable, the mind is a beggar, the mind is protected by the Guru and the Lord. By killing the five vices, it obtains comfort"¹ . . . The Guru addresses the mind in the following manner : "O mind ! they are five and I am one : how can we save our property ? They plunder us always; to whom should we request for protection ? You should repeat the Name of the Lord, O mind !"² The cure suggested for the malady of the mind is the primal sacred formula of the Name of the Lord. By this the sins of the previous births are washed away.³ Metaphorically, the mind is an elephant in the forest of the body. The Guru gives the *Ankush* (goad) of the true word.⁴

From the above quotations, it is quite clear that the five evils, i.e., lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego surround the mind. These evils can be destroyed only with the Word of the Guru. The intellect should be kept unpolluted and above all sorts of quarrels. The right intellect should be a strong rider over the mind-horse, which is to be bridled and caught by the forelock. This intellect

-
1. Manu māiā manu dhāiā manu pankhi akasi . . .
Panc māri sukh pāiā aisā Brahm vicāra. (Prabhāti M.I, p.1330)
 2. Avari panca ham ek janā . . . (Gauri M.I, p. 155)
 3. Aukhadh mantra mūlu man ekai . . . katanhārā lijai re
(Gauri M.I, p. 221)
 4. Manu kuncār kīā udiāne
Guru ankasu sacu sabad nisane. (Gauri M.I, p. 221)

will lead us towards the Lord and we will be recipients of honours.¹

Because of its company with the evils, the vices which originate in the mind consist of ill-will towards others, greed in respect of what belongs to others and want of faith in the scriptures. Against these vices, the virtues of mind are kindness towards others, indifference to material advantages and faith. Faith is the cause of reverence and piety.

The ethics of Guru Nanak can be summed up thus in the words of Guru Nanak himself : "The seeker should absorb himself in the higher spiritual studies with the grace of the Guru and obtain respect and veneration. O Creator, Thou art my Benefactor. One boon I beg of Thee and that is thy Name. Such is the knowledge of the Lord that the evil force with evil vision runs away, the ego vanishes and the five thieves are restrained from evil-doing. I beg such a boon : I want the rice of truth and self-control, the wheat of mercy, the platter of leaves of meditation, the milk of good actions, the clarified butter (ghee) of contentment. I want the milch-cow of tolerance and patience whose milk be drunk by the mind-calf without obstruction. I beg of Thee the cloth of the effort for singing Thy praises, so that Nanak may remain in continued remembrance of Thy qualities."²

1. Akali ehī na ākhtai akali gavaṭai bādi . . .
Nānak akhai rahu ehū hor galā Saitanu
(Sarang ki Vār M. IV, p. 1245)
2. Gurparsādī vidīā vicārai pari pāvai mānu . . .
Siphti saram ka kaprā magahu Hari gun Nānak ravatu rahai,
(Prabhāti M. I, p. 1329)

Chapter V

MYSTICISM OF GURU NANAK

Sikhism is a discipline, which, when observed completely, leads to the union with the Lord Almighty. In the previous chapter on 'Ethics of Guru Nanak' we have seen that ethical qualities play a great part in the spiritual uplift. They wash away all the dirt gathered on the physical and mental planes and tend to make the mind and body pure. This purity is a pre-requisite for spiritual awakening. It brings self-realization. One who realizes his self is, necessarily, pure.

S. N. Dasgupta, the well-known author of *A History of Indian Philosophy*,¹ has defined mysticism as a theory, doctrine, or view that considers reason to be incapable of discovering or of realising the nature of the ultimate truth, whatever be the nature of this ultimate truth, but at the same time believes in the certitude of some other means of arriving at it. We have already discussed that the ultimate reality cannot be realized through reason or worldly wisdom. Mystics are most emphatic on this point. Guru Nanak says—"The ultimate reality cannot be realized by worldly wisdom".² He says in another hymn—"We are good in talk, but bad in conduct. Our minds are

1. *Hindu Mysticism* by S. N. Dasgupta, 1959 edition, page 17.

2. Caturāi nahi cetiā jāi (Gauri Guāreri M. I, p. 221)

black and impure, but outwardly we are white".¹ Still in another hymn he says, "We cannot practise *yoga* with our talk".²

Guru Nanak believed in the certitude of some other means of arriving at the ultimate reality, which will be discussed in the present chapter.

Mysticism has been divided into six types,³ viz. (1) The mysticism of grace; (2) the mysticism of love; (3) pantheistic mysticism; (4) Nature mysticism; (5) Sacramental mysticism; and (6) Theosophical mysticism. Since the main principles of the great religions and philosophies are represented in Theosophy, theosophical mysticism has some points common with Sikh mysticism. Guru Nanak was opposed to all kinds of sacraments; therefore, the sacramental mysticism of the Vedas did not fall in with his line of thought. The acceptance of ritualistic and sacramental mysticism in Theosophy also makes the theosophical mysticism unacceptable in Sikh thought.

Guru Nanak laid emphasis on the inner significance of a ritual or a symbol. Therefore he said, "There can be no worship without respect, no restraint without the cognizance of truth and no *Yagyopavita* (*Janeu*) without continence".⁴ To a Yogi he said,

1. Galli assi canglā ācārī buriāh
Manahu kasudhā kaliā baharahu citviāh
(Vār Sri Rāga M. IV, p. 85)
2. Galli jog nā hoi
(Sūhi M. I, p. 730)
3. *The Nature of Mysticism* by C. Jinarajadasa, 1934, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India.
4. Pati vinu pūjā sati vinu sanjam jāti vinu kāhe janeū.
(Rāmkalī M. I, p. 903)

“Have the ear-rings of contentment, the bag and bowl of effort and the ashes of contemplation etc.”. The following verses are an interesting study regarding his attitude towards the rituals : “If a thief steals and gives the stolen article in charity for his *Pitris* (departed elders), the article will be recognised in the next world and the *Pitris* are held up as thieves. The hands of the mediator in this case may be cut because this is the real justice. One only gets that in the next world, which he has procured through honest effort and then has given in charity, saith Nanak”. This example clarifies that the Brahmin who exploited the masses for his personal gains, was the target of the Guru.

The remaining four types of mysticism i.e. the mysticism of grace, the mysticism of love, pantheistic mysticism and nature mysticism come within the broader orbit of Sikh mysticism. The mysticism of grace plays a vital role in Sikh religion. Guru Nanak says, “The body takes its birth because of karmas, but the final emancipation is attained through the grace of the Lord”.¹ None can influence the Lord for His gifts. A person, while awake, may not receive them, but a sleeping person may be awakened and gifts may be bestowed upon him.² The Lord resides within every *Jīva* and does not take advice of any person for bestowing His grace.³

1. Karmi āvai kaprā nadri mokh duār (Japji p. 2)

2. Dāti Sāhib sandiā kiā calai tisu nāl . . .

(Vār Sri Rāgā M. IV, p. 83)

3. Sarabi nirantari āpe āpi

(Āsā M. I, p. 412)

Man is sinful and God is gracious. Thus there is a gulf which exists between the nature of man and the nature of God. This gulf can only be bridged by the grace of the Lord. Since *Jīva* is weak and helpless,¹ it bows and prays before the Almighty. The prayer kills the ego of the individual. The repentance shown in the prayer purifies the mind and this is the beginning of the grace. The individual prays like this in the words of Guru Nanak: "Our sins are great like the wide ocean full of water. Have mercy on us and be graceful so that the sinking stones may swim".² The fear of the Lord occupies the mind. It is not fear in the ordinary sense, it is the indescribable awe of the Lord Almighty. The Guru says, "The fear is great and heavy in weight. . . . if we bear this weight on our head, we are initiated by the gracious Lord into the discipline of the preceptor. None can get the final emancipation without the fear of the Lord. This fear has created the rightful healthy awe."³ With the fear of the Lord, we realize the Lord. With this fear all other fears vanish away. Of what use is that fear of the Lord which brings in several other fears?"⁴ Thus the fear of the Lord brings us under the discipline of the preceptor. The life of love and

1. Enā jantā kai vasi kichu nahī . . .
(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 469)
2. Jetā samund sāgaru niru bhariā tete avguna hamāre
Diā karo kichu miharu upavuhu dubde pathar tare.
(Gaurī M. I, p. 156)
3. Bahu muc bhara vaddā tolu . . . rākhiā bhāi savāri,
(Gaurī M. I, p. 151)
4. Dari gharu . . . daru pāi.
(Gaurī M. I, p. 151)

devotion begins. This phase of mysticism is known as mysticism of love.

God is love and reciprocates our love with open arms. In this case Godhead becomes intensely personal like a human beloved. Shri Radha Kamal Mukerjee writes in his book *The Theory and Art of Mysticism*, "In the *Guru Granth* of the Sikhs, we find the intimacy of spiritual love expressed also in terms of the earthly bride's wedding with the transcendental Lord".¹ Guru Nanak says, "The Lord has come to my house. O friends ! get together and sing His praises . . . listen O friend ! the Enchanter has enchanted me; my body and mind seem to be soaked in the nectar".² Again, the Guru says, "Come my Lord ! so that I may see Thee. I am standing at my house and looking for Thee. My mind is absorbed in Thee. Listen, my Lord ! My mind is absorbed in Thee and I have full faith in Thee."³

The poetry of Guru Nanak is characterised by the exuberance of love for the Lord. The Lord is lovable and kind. Though the Lord of the guru is *Nirguna* or unmanifested, the love for him is manifested in several ways :

O mind ! Bear the love of Hari like the love of water and lotus.

-
1. See page 173, edition 1960.
 2. Sakhī milahu rasi mangalu . . . manu tani amriti bhinā
(Sūhi M. I, p. 764)
 3. Āvahu sajanā hau dekhā darshanu terā Rām . . . mai terā
bharvāsā.
(Sūhi M. I, p. 764)

Though the lotus is thrown hither and thither by the waves, still it blossoms in love.

Having taken birth in water, it dies without water.

O mind, how can you get release without love ?

The lovable Lord is one with the lovers and blesses them with abundant devotion.

O mind ! Bear the love of Hari like the love of fish and water.

The water, in abundance, gives greater comfort and peace to the mind and body of fish.

Only God knows the misery which it undergoes without water.

O mind ! Bear the love of Hari like the love of *Chatrik* with clouds.

Of what use are to him the tanks filled with water and green plains, if he does not get a drop from the clouds.

.

O mind ! Bear the love of Hari like the love of water with milk.

It boils itself but saves the milk . . .

O mind ! Bear the love of Hari like the love of *Chakvi* with sun.

Though the sun is far away, the *Chakvi* has no doubt about its nearness.

.

(Sri Rāga M. I.)

The mystic love is identical with devotion. The bride is whole-heartedly devoted towards the Lord. The fear of the Lord makes her devotion stronger and her love brighter. There can be no love and devotion

without the fear of the Lord. The Guru says : "O mind ! cross the ocean of *Sansāra* by absorbing thyself in the feet of the Lord combining the fear of the Lord with love and devotion".¹ Like Kabir, the Guru has also mentioned the love for the lotus-feet of the Lord. He says, "If one steadies his mind on the lotus-feet of the Lord in the internal recesses of the heart, he is blessed with long life and consciousness".² The veneration of the lotus-feet results in the destruction of ego. He says, "I am the servant of the Lord. I have caught hold of the feet of the Lord—the life of the world—and have killed and finished the ego".³ All the evils are shed away with the exuberance of love.⁴ Those who do not possess the sap of love, they can never enjoy the love of the Lord. They come and go away like the guest of a desolate house.⁵ But whosoever desires to follow the path of love, he has to carry his head on the palm of his hand. On this path he has to sacrifice his head without any hesitation.⁶ If the arrows of

-
1. Bhai Bhāi bhagatī taru bhavajalu manā citu lāi Hari caranī,
(Gūjri M. I, p. 505)
 2. Caran kamal urdhāre cit, ciru jivanu cetan nīt nīt
(Rāmkalī M. I, p. 932)
 3. Apune Thākur ki hau ceri
Caran gahe jag jīvan Prabh ke haumai mārū niberi
(Sārang M. I, p. 1197)
 4. Nānak prem mahā rasī sabhi buriāiā charu
(Vār Sūhi M. III, p. 786)
 5. Jini na paio prem rasu . . . tio jau
(Vār Sūhi M. III, p. 790)
 6. Je tau prem khelan kā cāu
(Shlok Vara te Vadhik M. I, p. 1412)

love pierce the body, there is no remedy with any doctor in the world.¹ But without love, the body is like a heap of ashes.² The love of family and wealth is of no use in spiritual development. All other love except the love of Hari is duality.³ "In Sufi mysticism earthly love is not disregarded, but it blossoms forth through the cult of Beauty into Divine love."⁴ "The cult of *Sahaja* advocates a fervent romantic passion so profound and yet so shorn of sense-enjoyment that the union between the lover and the beloved is one care-free, eternal interpenetration which is God itself. Such supreme ecstasy, where love is Truth and Truth is love, is not possible in the case of morbid souls"⁵ Guru Nanak bows before such a person who has Truth in his heart and within that Truth Love resides.⁶ The woman may decorate herself in *Sahaja* and may have a fervent romantic passion, but it is of no value without the response of love from the Lord.⁷ Those whose love has been responded by the Lord are decorated in *Sahaja* with

1. Prem ke kân lage tan bhītari vaid ki janai kārī jiu.
(Mārū M. I, p. 993)
2. Andaru khālī prem binu dhai dherī tan charu.
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 62)
3. Jarau aisi preeti kutamb . . . dibidhā karam bikāri.
(Sārang M. I, p. 1198)
4. *Theory and Art of Mysticism*, page 132.
5. *ibid.*
6. Sācu ridai sacu prem nivās
(Gaurī M. I, p. 224)
7. Sahaji sigar kāmāni kari āvai, ta sohāgan ja kantai bhavai.
(Sūhi M. I, p. 750)

contentment and sweet speech.¹ That lady of the Lord is happy in *Sahaja* who has followed the discipline of the preceptor. The Lord loves her and her mind and body feel comfort in love.² Such is the Guru's interpretation of *Sahaja*. The state of *Sahaja* is realised only on following the discipline of the Guru, which lays emphasis on the Name of the Lord. The Guru has already said that there can be no love of the Lord without the remembrance of His Name. Since the Name is given by the Guru, it is asserted that the love of the Lord cannot take its birth without the help of the Guru.³

Thus in Guru Nanak's mysticism of love, the Guru and the Name occupy a very important place.

The Guru is the mediator and the bridge-builder. Just as a bride is absorbed in the love of her lord, in a similar manner, the disciple should absorb himself in the word of the Guru.⁴ Guru has been described as the enlightener, who has, within his purview, the whole creation. He wants to unite all who are undergoing misery because of the separation from the Lord. The separation has been due to the wrong channelisation of the forces. The mind, instead of realising its original nature, rushes towards worldly

-
1. Jāi puchuhu sohagani tusi rāviā kini guni
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 17)
 2. Sahaja sukhī var kāmāni piāri jisū gurbachāni man māniā.
(Malār M. I, p. 1254)
 3. Binu guru priti nā ūpajai . . .
 Gur seva sukh pāiai . . .
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 60)
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 58)
 4. Pir seti dhan prem . . .
(Mārū M. I, p. 993)

enjoyments and is thus bound down by lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego. The senses and sense-organs lead it towards its doom of transmigration, until and unless the intellect comes to its rescue. Mostly the intellect is also overpowered by the mind and the senses. It is the Guru who purifies our mind and intellect. Guru Nanak says, "The mind is like an elephant and the body like a forest. The Guru controls the elephant with his goad of true word".¹ He says further, "Neither the mind is killed nor the success is obtained. It is under the control of the vices and duality. It can become one with the Lord, if it follows the instructions of the Guru . . . When the mind is misled, it thinks only of the vices. When the mind is misled, it puts more burden on our head . . . When the mind is misled, it goes to the house of *māyā*. It does not remain steady because of lust . . ."²

The Guru is one who unites every separated soul with the Lord. A meeting with the true Guru results in killing the ego. The misery born of vices ends and the good fortune is awakened . . . A meeting with the Guru can only be considered if we remember the Name of the Lord. All have tried hard, but none could realize the Lord without the Guru. The Guru takes us out of illusions and puts us on the right path³

-
1. Man kuncara kãia udiānai (Gauri M. I, p. 221)
 2. Nā manu marai nā kārāju hoi . . . (Gauri M. I, p. 222)
 3. Nanak satigur aisā jāntai jo . . . (Sri Rāga M. I, p. 72)

The Guru is the benefactor; he is the house of snow (i.e. full of peace) and the light of the three worlds.¹ There can be no honour without the Guru and no emancipation without the honour.² There is no holy place of pilgrimage like the Guru.³ The Guru is like a river with pure water, which removes all the dirt. A meeting with the true Guru is like taking a full bath which transforms an animal to a god.⁴ The Guru is like an ocean, his following like a stream. It is an honour to take a bath in it.⁵ If we think of the unfathomable ocean-like true Guru, we will be benefited by the attainment of the gem of the Name of the Lord.⁶ This Word itself is the Guru. It is deep and serene. Without it the world is mad.⁷

The main functions of the Guru are to give the Word to the disciple and impart knowledge to him. The water is contained in the pitcher, there can be no pitcher without water. The mind can be controlled by knowledge and there can be no knowledge

-
1. Gur dātā guru hivai ghari gur dīpak tih loi
(Mājh kī Vār M. I, p. 137)
 2. Nanak guru binu nahe pati pati vinu pāri nā pāi
(Mājh kī Vār M. I, p. 138)
 3. Nanak guru samān tīratha nahi koi . . . (Āsā M. I, p. 437)
 4. Gur dariā sadā . . . (Prabhāṭi M. I, p. 1329)
 5. Gurū samundu nadi sabhi sikhi natai jitu vadiāi
(Mājh kī Vār M. I, p. 150)
 6. Sevahu satguru samundu athāhā (Mārū M. I, p. 1043)
 7. Sabad gur pīrā gaharī gambhirā binu sabdai jagu baurāna
(Sorāṭhi M. I, p. 635)

without the Guru.¹

The best action in the world is the remembrance of the Name of the Lord.² All the sins are washed away with the love of the Name.³ Just as a small fire reduces to ashes a large stock of faggots, similarly if the Name of the Lord resides in the heart for a short while, it has the potentiality of taking us to meet the Lord.⁴

The Guru says, "Even with the performance of the sacrifices, austerities, worship and virtuous acts, the body undergoes miseries. The release is never obtained without the Name of the Lord and the liberation is achieved by the faithful disciple. The birth is useless without the Name of the Lord. One eats poison, speaks poison and wanders uselessly without the Name of the Lord. One may study holy books and perform *Sandhya* but without the word of the Guru, there is no release and one perishes without the Name. Clad in cotton and carrying staff and bowl, the disciple may go and wander at holy places, but there is no peace without the Name, by repeating which, one gets final emancipation. With matted hair on the head and the body

-
1. Kumbhe baddhā jal rahai jal binu Kumbhu nā hoi
(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 469)
 2. Harinamai tuli na pujai ji lakh koti karam kamāi
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 62)
 3. Bharīai mat papa ke sangi, oh dhope navai ke rang
(Japji, p. 4)
 4. Idhanu adhik sakelīai bhai pāvaku rancak pāi
(Sorathī M. I, p. 637)

smeared with ashes, one may remain naked and unclothed, but there is no satisfaction without the Name . . ."¹ In brief it may be said that the world burns like fire and the Name of the Lord is cool.²

The love of the Lord increases with the remembrance of the Name. This name is the *WORD* given by the Guru. If the word of the Guru is repeated with complete devotion and surrender, the Lord meets the devotee and a permanent union is attained. Ethical qualities are necessary for spiritual development. Continence, patience, fear of the Lord, love etc. are pre-requisites for the retention of the Name of the Lord in the human body.³ The Name is to be repeated with tongue. The Guru says, "If a tongue is multiplied into one lakh and ultimately to twenty lakh tongues and with each tongue the Name of the Lord is repeated for one lakh times, the union with the Lord is obtained through this honourable means.⁴ The Name of the Lord can be remembered with every breath. The Guru says, "If the Lord is forgotten, I die in misery. I remember Him with every breath and loaf and search for Him. I see the Name of the Lord in a state of detachment . . ."⁵

-
1. Jagan hom pun tap pūjā deh dukhi nit dūkh sahai
(Bhairo M. I, p. 1127)
 2. Ātas dunīa khunak nām khudāiā
(Malār kī Vār M. I, p. 1291)
 3. Jatu pahārā dhīrajū suniar (Japji, p. 8)
 4. Ik dū jibho lakh hoi lakh hovahi lakh vis (Japji, p. 7)
 5. Merā Prabhu bisrai hau marau dukhālī
(Bilāwali M. I, p. 796)

The devotee of Guru Nanak has to live the life of a householder and also has to remain unattached. He has to perform all his worldly duties, but has to focus his attention on the Lord. He has to become like a lotus, which is born and bred in water but remains unaffected by it. The Guru says : "Just as the lotus remains unaffected by water . . . similarly we remain unaffected by the world, if we concentrate on the Name or the word of the Guru, and in this way we can cross the ocean of *sansar*".¹

The Name is not merely a word or a group of letters; it is a vital force. The Name that is usually repeated by the Sikhs is "Wahe Guru" which literally means "the wonderful preceptor". The preceptor, in this case is God Himself, who is an indescribable wonder and whose creation creates a sense of wonder (*Vismād*). The Name (*Waheguru*) thus produces a link between the soul and the over-soul i.e. wonderful preceptor. It is an airship taking us into the wonderful Lord. We do not find the use of this name in full in the *bānī* of Guru Nanak. It is, however, found in parts in his verses and the hymns of the third and the fourth Gurus, in the form of 'wahu' and 'Guru'. The Bhats (or bards), who attended the court of the Guru, used this Name in full and the last Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, put it in their words of greeting, so that the Sikhs (or the Khalsa) may remember the Name whenever they meet each

1. Jaise jali mahi kamal nirālamu murgāi naisane
 Surati sabad bhav sāgar tariāi Nanak Nām vakhāne,
 (Rāmkalī M. I, p. 938)

other. The Name or word openly used by Guru Nanak is IK-OAMKĀR, a derivative of OM which had been used in India since the Vedic times.

The name is a seed-mantra (*Bija mantra*), which, when sown in the field of body, grows in time, bringing forth the fruit of the union with the Lord. Guru Nanak has given us a primary formula (*Mūl mantra*) which has been repeated many times in the body of Guru Granth Sahib. The first word (or letter) of the sacred formula is Ik-Oamkār and the formula itself occurs in the very beginning of Japji.¹

The modes of self-realization, which had been used in India from very ancient times, are *mantras*, *yantras* and *tantras*. A Mantra is considered Brahman in sound body. A Yantra is an effective and systematised mechanism designed for achieving a definite end. A Tantra is a system or way of realization. The Matrix of *mantram* is bindu, of *yantram*, *kalā* and of *tantram* *nāda*. Guru Nanak has talked of *nāda* and *bindu*,² He has instructed his followers not to concentrate on the differentiation of *nāda* and *bindu*, but, instead, they should follow the discipline of the true Guru in order to attain the state of final beatitude.³ In the times of Sikh Gurus the Tanti-riks introduced mantras and yantras for the fulfilment

1. See the Appendix "A Critical Study of Japji".

2. Nād bind kī suratī samāi, satiguru sevi Param Pad pai.
(Āsā M. I, p. 352)

3. Kāmaniāri kāman pāi bahurangī gal tīgā.
(Vadhans M. I, p. 582)

of all kinds of desires. The word Tantra was used for all kinds of charms. Such modes used for self-satisfaction were condemned by the Guru.

The term used for the union of the soul with Higher-soul in Indian religious terminology is *Yoga*. Shrimad Bhagwad Gita lays emphasis on three types of *yoga* i.e. *Karma yoga*, *Bhakti yoga* and *Gyan yoga*. *Karma yoga* is union through action, *Bhakti yoga*, union through devotion, and *Gyan yoga*, union through knowledge. Guru Nanak believes in a balanced combination and synthesis of all these three *yogas*. His *yoga* consists in the realization of the Lord living within the fold of *Māyā*.¹ The world, which is the fold of *māyā*, is the field of action. A devotee of Guru Nanak being a householder, necessarily jumps into this field. He has been instructed to earn his living by honest means and then give something out of his income to the needy and the deserving.² He has to do good actions without caring for the fruit. He has to devote himself whole-heartedly to the remembrance of the Name of the Lord. He has to follow strictly the discipline ordained by the Guru. He has to grasp the knowledge and then give it to others. Through his study he has to get worldly knowledge and through the Guru, the spiritual knowledge. Thus, action, devotion and knowledge are part of his daily life. He is thus a saint, soldier and scholar. The Guru

1. Anjan māhi niranjan rahiai

(Sūhi M. I, p. 730)

2. Ghāli khai kichu hathahu dehi

(Vār Sārang M. IV, p. 1245)

says, "If he lights the lamp (of knowledge) in the temple of his mind, and makes his body the bed, he will enjoy the union when the King of Knowledge comes on the bed".¹

In the Guru's mysticism of love, the *Bhakti yoga* has a very important place. The Guru does not accept *Hatha yoga*, the yoga of nerves, centres and circles, because it is not the proper yoga for a householder. Moreover, it does not bear any sign of love or devotion and, instead, there is a great physical and mental strain. The *Raja yoga* of Patanjali is also not acceptable because of the practices of the regulation of breath and other practices. Regarding these *yogas* the Guru says : "He (the yogi) practises *Neoli*, *Bhathi*, *Rechak*, *Purak* and *Kumbhak*; but without the true Guru he does not know anything. He is misled in illusion and drowned".² The *yoga* of the Guru is the *yoga* of the Name, which is known as *Name-yoga* or *Surt-shabad-yoga*. It is also called *Sahaj yoga* about which the Guru says, "The ear-ring of the mind be the word of the Guru and the patched quilt be of forbearance. Whatever God does, it may be accepted without grumbling and the treasure of *Sahaja yoga* be obtained".³

1. Man mandari je dipaku jāle kākā sej kareī
Giān Rāu jab sejai āvai tā Nanak bhog kareī

(Āsā M. I, p. 359)

2. Nivili karam bhuangam bhāthi recak pūrak kumbh karai
Binu Satigur kichu sojhi nāhi bharme bhūlā būdi marai

(Prabhāti M. I, p. 1343)

3. Guru ka sabadu manai mahi mundrā . . . (Āsā M. I, p. 359)

The *Sahaja yoga*, according to the Guru, consists in subduing the mind through the grace of the Guru and in the extinction of all troubles and ills in the company of the Guru and the saints. This is the *Bhakti yoga* of the Guru.¹

There can be no *Bhakti* (devotion) without the qualities.² The Guru is in favour of *Naudha Bhakti* (nine types of *Bhakti* e.g. *Archanā*, *Vandanā*, *Pād sevan* etc.) but for him the best form of *Bhakti* is *Bhae Bhakti* i.e. devotion through love. The real *Bhakti* can be understood after coming under the discipline of the true Guru.³ The real *Bhakti* for the Guru is *Parā Bhakti* or *Antrang Bhakti*. *Aparā Bhakti* or *Behrang Bhakti* does not find favour with him. His *Bhakti* is essentially *Anurāga Bhakti* and not *Laukika Bhakti*. He is not in favour of formal modes of worship. The ordinary *Archanā Bhakti* consists of the worship of the deity with sandal-wood and flowers, but the *archanā* of the Guru is as follows :

“I make the sandal-wood of Thy Name and the *Ursa* (the round piece of stone used for rubbing sandal-wood) of the mind; if the *Kungu* (*kesar*) of good action is mixed, this is the inward worship of the heart”.⁴

1. Guru manu mario karu sanjog . . . (Basant M. I, p. 1170)

2. Vinu gun kite bhagati nā hoi (Japji, p. 4)

3. Horu kitai bhagati nā hovaī bin satguru ke updes.
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 22)

4. Terā nām kari caranāthiā je manu ursā hoi
(Rāga Gūjri M. I, p. 489)

In *Naudha Bhakti*, besides *archanā*, there are *vandanā* (adoration), *sakhā* (friendship), *dāsa* (service), *ātam-nivedan* (self-surrender), *shravana* (hearing), *kīrtan* (singing of praises), *pād-sevan* (worship of the feet) and *Simran* (remembrance). All of these types have their significance. *Ātam-nivedan*, *shravana*, *kīrtan* *pād-sevan* and *simran* are prominent. We have made mention of *ātam-nivedan* earlier. The devotee surrenders himself completely before the Lord physically, mentally and materially. He attunes his mind, speech and action to the discipline. *Shravana Bhakti* will be explained with *mannan* and *niddhyasan* in the Appendix on Japjī. These three modes of worship help towards the union with the Lord. A mention has been made of *Pād-sevan*. The devotee concentrates on the lotus feet of the Lord. *Simran* is the remembrance of the Name of the Lord. This is the principal method of achieving unity with the Lord. *Kīrtan* (i.e. singing the praises of the Lord) helps greatly in the spiritual development; therefore, it has been given a significant place in Sikh Religion. Mardana, the companion of the Guru, used to play on the rebec and the Guru used to sing his hymns in praise of the Lord. All the hymns of the Sikh Gurus are set in different Ragas and they are meant to be sung. *Āsā ki Vār* of Guru Nanak is sung daily in the Sikh Gurdwaras. The Guru says, "Do not sing the songs of separation, sing the songs of Brahman".¹ He says again, "Sing, sing O Lady ! the thoughts of

1. Gāvahu gitu nā birharā Nānak Brahm bicāro.

(Vadhans M. I, p. 581)

knowledge. The Lord—the life of the world—has come to thy house”.¹

The *Sādh Sangat* or the company of the saint has a significant role to perform in the spiritual development of a devotee. The devotee is required to join the holy congregation every day in order to understand and practise the discipline ordained by the Guru. He gets proper guidance from experienced disciples. The Guru-soul remains present in the congregation. The chief characteristic of this congregation is its power of transformation. Just as a touchstone transforms the ordinary metal into gold, similarly the congregation makes a god of an ordinary animal-man.² The good company makes a person good. He becomes virtuous and his vices are washed away.³ In this congregation, only the Name of the Lord is the theme of all its activities.⁴ In this congregation there is the gradual spiritual development of the devotee from the lowest rung to the highest. The individual soul rises from the region of piety and, passing through the regions of knowledge, effort and grace, it reaches the final stage i.e. the region of truth. An interpretation of these five regions has been given in the Appendix “A critical study of Japī”. The

-
1. Gavahu gavahu kāmāni bibek bicāru. (Āsā M. I, p. 351)
 2. Pārasi bheṭi kancanu dhātu hoī satsangati ki vadiāi.
(Gūjri M. I, p. 505)
 3. Ūtam sangati ūtamu hovai, gun kau dhāvai avgan dhovai.
(Āsā M. I, p. 414)
 4. Sat sangat kaisi jāniāi, jithai eko nām vakhāniāi.
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 72)

final stage of emancipation has also been called *Param pad* (Main state), *Chautha pad* (the fourth state) or *Turiyā*. *Turiyā* or *Sahaja* is the fourth or the final state. The first three states are *jāgrit* (state of awakening), *swapan* (dream state) and *sushopit* (dreamless sleep state). One who rises above all these three states enters the fourth and the final, known as *Turiyā*. The Guru says, "The three states are described (by the Vedas). But the *Turiyā* state is the realization of Hari (Brahman) through the true Guru".¹ He says in another hymn, "The true devotee attains the *Turiyā* state with the support of the company of the saints".² God-realization has been symbolised in the poetry of the Guru by the word *AMRIT* or nectar. It has been represented by the instance of gold and butter.³ Another symbol is the upturning of the lotus. The downward lotus is a sign of ignorance while the upward lotus is a sign of the light of knowledge.⁴ That door (*So Dar*) described by Guru Nanak in *Japji* is the tenth door where all the forces or gods are waiting for the commands of the Creator. This symbol brings forth the omnipotency of Almighty.

-
1. Tin avasthā kahahi vakhiān, Turiāvasthā Satigur te Hari jān
(Gaurī M. I, p. 154)
 2. Turiāvasthā gurmukhi pālai, sant sabhā kī ot lahi
(Āsā M. I, p. 356)
 3. Bhāndā bhāu Amrit titu dhāli, ghaṛiai sabadu caci ṭaksāl
(Japji, p. 8)
 4. Ultio kamalu Brahmū bicari
(Gaurī M. I, p. 153)

Thus we see that the mysticism of Guru Nanak is mainly the mysticism of love. Another type of mysticism, which we find in most of the religions in one form or the other is pantheistic mysticism. Pantheism is explained as "God is all". The Guru says, "He who is the cause of everything pervades everywhere".¹ "Wherever I go, thou art there, O true Creator".² "Thou art the wooden tablet, thou art the pen and thou art the writing. There is only One, O Nanak, and no second."³ The Guru believes in the all-pervasive Lord. The pantheistic mysticism, however, emphasises that God and man are one. The line of thought taken by Shankara that "man is God" in his famous saying *Tat tvam asi* has not been accepted by the Guru, because, in this case, when man is Brahman himself, there is no need for efforts towards the unification of man and God. A discipline believing in love and grace can never accept '*So ham*' ("I am He"). This line of pantheistic mysticism does not find favour with Guru Nanak. He agrees with the ideal of searching the path of unity with Brahman. He does not deny the existence of matter as Shankar does. For him the world is real and the weaknesses of man are also real. He has to remove

-
1. Thathai thāni thānantari soi jā kā kiā sabhu hoā
(Āsā M. I, p. 433)
 2. Tū sabhni thāi jithai haujāi sace sirjanhāru jiū
(Āsā M. I, p. 438)
 3. Āpe patti kalam āpi upāru lekhu bhi tū
(Malār ki Vār M. I, p. 1291)

his failings and come under a discipline in order to achieve final emancipation.

Another type of mysticism is the nature mysticism. "To the pantheist, nature is a veil over the great reality; to the nature-mystic she is real, and not an illusion . . . everywhere he sees, according to his temperament and mood, rhythm, order, beauty, love, and beneficent law; he needs no faith or doctrine to guide him to God, for he communes with God as he contemplates nature."¹ Guru Nanak says, "I bow with devotion to the Lord who lives in Nature".² "After creating nature, He lives in it."³ "He has created the throne of nature."⁴ "The mind is satisfied after seeing nature."⁵

The hymn of Guru Nanak on nature in 'Āsā dī vār' clarifies his concept of nature. Not only he sees nature in nether-world and skies, in colours and kinds, he also sees nature in eating, drinking, wearing, thinking, seeing, listening etc. He sees nature in virtues and vices, in honour and disgrace, and in holy scriptures.

1. *The Nature of Mysticism* by C. Jinarajadasa, II edition, 1934, pages 44-46.

2. Balihāri Qudrati vasiā, terā anti nā jāi lakhiā.
(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 469)

3. Qudrati kar ke vasiā soi (Vār Sri Rāga M. I, p. 89)

4. Qudrati takhatu racāiā saci niberanhāro
(Vadhans M. I, p. 580)

5. Qudrati dekhi rahe manu māniā (Mārū M. I, p. 1043)

The Guru says in another hymn, "Thou art in water, on plains and within the earth and sky and pervade everywhere".¹

The above survey of the mysticism of Guru Nanak makes it quite clear that his mysticism is mainly the mysticism of love. The intense love of the bride for the lord is the keynote of his mysticism. The rendering of one complete hymn of love written by the Guru is given below :

O ignorant lady, why are you egoistic ?

Why do you not enjoy the love of Hari at your home ?

The Lord is nearby, O mad woman ! what do you search outside ?

Apply the antimony of the Fear of the Lord in your eyes and decorate yourself with love.

You will be considered a *Sohagan* when the Lord responds to your love.

What will the ignorant girl do, if the Lord does not like her ?

She tries through several means, but she does not win the love of the Lord.

Without the *Karmas*, she does not obtain the desired fruit, though she tries very hard.

She is intoxicated with greed and ego and is under the control of *māyā*.

This way she does not win the Lord, she is ignorant.

1. Tū jali thali mahiali bharipuri linā tū āpe sarab samānā.

(Sūhi M. I, p. 730).

Go and ask those beloved ladies : how to win the Lord.

What He does, should be accepted with devotion, and cleverness and rudeness should be ended.

Whose grace helps us to attain love, His feet be loved devotedly.

Whatever the Lord says, do it devotedly, surrender the mind and body. Such a fragrance be used, O sister ! the beloved ladies say like this the Lord can be obtained this way.

The Lord is obtained by loving the self, no other cleverness is useful.

If the Lord sees with Grace, the day is lucky, the woman obtains the nine treasures.

She is beloved, when the Lord loves, she is fortunate.

With such devotion she is intoxicated in *Sahaja*, she is absorbed in love night and day.

She is beautiful, she is wise, she is sane.¹

1. Iānaṛie mānaṛā kāi karaḥi . . . kaḥiaī sā siāni.

(Tilang M. I, p. 722)

Chapter VI

COSMOGONY AND COSMOLOGY AS PROPOUNDED BY GURU NANAK

Cosmogony or the origin of the Creation

Guru Nanak has described Brahman as the Creator in the *Mūl Mantra*.¹ He creates, therefore, He is the cause, the origin of the creation. In *Japjī*, he has been mentioned as the spouse of *Māyā*,² the female principle and through her the father of three sons i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. He is the wielder of the three powers of creation, preservation and destruction, represented by the above-mentioned three gods respectively.

The Guru says that for millions of years there was darkness all around. There was neither earth nor sky. There was neither day, nor night, nor sun, nor moon. He was in abstract meditation. There was no division of creation, no division of sound, no air, no water, no life, no death, no transmigration, no region, no nether-world, no seven seas, no running brook. There was then no firmament, no mortal world, no nether-world, no heaven, no hell no birth, no

1. Kartā Purakh

(Japjī, p. 1)

2. Ekā māi jugat viāi . . .

(Japjī)

death, no coming, no going. There was no Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva. There was none except Him, no man, no woman, no distinction of caste and birth, no comfort and no agony. There was no *Yati* then, no *Sati*, no forest-dweller, no *Siddhas*, no easy-going *Sadhak*, no *Yogi* no *Jangam*, no guise, no *Natha*. There was no *Japa*, no *Tapas*, no *Sanjam*, no fasting, no worship, no narrator of duality. The only self-existent Lord enjoyed and evaluated Himself. There was no cleanliness, no continence, no *Tulsi* rosary, no *Gopi*, no *Krishna*, no cow, no milkman, no *tantra*, no *mantra*, no heresy, none to play on the flute. There was no *Karma Kānda* and no mammonfly, no distinction of caste and birth was seen, no noose of attachment, no death in destiny, none to worship. There was no calumny, no depreciation, no life, no *Gorakh*, no *Machhindra (Matsyendra)*, no knowledge, no contemplation, no family origin, no account keeping. There was no caste-distinction, no Brahmana, no Kshatriya, no god, no temple, no cow, no *Gayatri mantra*, no *Havana*, no sacrifice, no bathing at holy places, no guide for worship. There was no *Mullah* (priest), no *Qadi* (Judge), no *Shaikhs* and *Hajis*, no subjects, no king, no world of ego, no speech and none to speak. There was no love, no devotion, no *Shiva*, and no *Shakti*, no friend, no male-semen, no female ova. He Himself was the stockist and Himself the purchaser. It was His will. There were no *Vedas*, no *Kitebs* (Semitic scriptures), no *Smritis*, no *Shastras*, no reading of *Puranas*, no sunrise, no sunset. He Himself was the speaker, Himself the unfathomable, the unknowable and Himself

the guide. When it was His will, he created the world, stretched the wide expanse without prop; He created Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and augmented the attachment of *māyā*.¹

The Hymn of Creation given above can be compared with *Nasadiya Sukta* of Rgveda, wherein the Rshi of yore has conveyed similar thoughts about the Divine Will. But who knows about this Divine Will ? The religious leaders who have tried to fix the time of creation have been plainly told by the Guru that the *Pandits* could not know the time. If they had known it, it must have been mentioned in the *Puranas*. The *Qadis* could not know the time. If they had known it, the Muslim scriptures must have divulged it. The *Yogi* does not know the time—the lunar date, the day, the month and the season. The creator who creates the universe, alone knows the time of creation.²

The innumerable flood-gates of life were opened by the Divine Will, after a long span of abstract meditation by the Lord. The Pauranic measurement of this span is thirty-six *yugas*. In this period, there was darkness everywhere. The question arises as to the process of creation. In *Japji* the Guru has said, "The wide expanse was created with *ONE UTTERANCE* and lakhs of rivers (of life) began to flow".³ On the face of it, this idea resembles the

1. Arbad narbad dhundūkārā . . . (Mārū M. I, p. 1035)

2. Vel nā pāiā pandatī . . . āpe jānai soi (Japji, p. 4)

3. Jug chatīh gubāru tis hī bhāiā (Malār ki Vār M. I, p. 1282)

Muslim concept of creation, but “one utterance”¹ or one sound is the *Sabdā* which is a *Tanmatra* of *Akash*, from which the other gross evolutes came into being. Air is an evolute from *ākāsa*, fire is the evolute from air, water is the evolute from fire and finally the earth is the evolute from water. This is the process of creation. The Guru says, “From the True Lord the air took birth, the water from the air and all the three worlds from the water, with the light of the Lord in everything”.² This idea is contained in a couplet in *Srī Rāga*, wherein the whole process could not be related. The Guru mentioned this Sankhyan theory very briefly in the couplet. The Pauranic idea of the creation of the earth and sky from the shells of the egg of Brahma has also been given by the Guru in order to convey his view that the creator, in fact, is only Brahman and none other.³

In the concluding shloka of *Japjī*, the Guru relates the play of the gross elements in the following manner : “The air is the preceptor, the water is the male parent, the earth is the female parent, Mahat or consciousness joins them, the day and night are the male and female nurses, in this way the world plays on”.⁴ Such is the constitution of the creation,

-
1. Kitā pasāu eko kavāu . . . (Japjī, p. 3)
 2. Sāce te pavanā bhiā . . . ghati ghati joti samai
(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 19)
 3. Āpe sacu kīā kar jori, Andaj phorī jorī vichorī,
dhart akasu kie baisan kau thao . . . (Bilawali M, I, p. 839)
 4. Pavanu gurū pānī pitā mātā dharti mahatu,
divasu rāti dui dāi dāiā khelai sagal jagat. (Japjī, p. 8)

in which the grosser elements play a significant part. The *ākāsa* and *fire* could not be mentioned in this couplet as in the previous one, but their part is also no less significant. The foremost part in the creation is that of water, which gives life to all sorts of *Jīvas*.¹

When the *yogis* of his time questioned the Guru about the origin of the creation, he replied that the world takes its birth in ego.² This thought is again Sankhyan. With the union of *Purusa* and *Prakriti*, *Mahat (Buddhi)* is born. From *Buddhi*, *Ahamkara* or ego takes its birth and *Ahamkara* further gives birth to *Devas*, mind, five senses, five sense organs, five *Tanmatras* and five gross elements. Twenty-one principles spring from *Ahamkara* comprising both the subtle world and the gross world of five elements. In *Āsā ki Vār*, the Guru says, "The *Jīvā* comes in ego, goes in ego, takes its birth in ego, dies in ego, gives in ego, takes in ego, earns in ego, loses in ego . . ." ³ All the activities of the *Jīva* from birth till death emerge from ego.

The world is said to have been born from *Shūnyatā*. The word '*Shūnya*' is from Buddhist philosophical terminology. *Shūnyavāda* is an important school of Buddhism. Ordinarily, *Shūnya* means 'a zero', 'empty void' or 'nothing' but the *Madhyamikas* use it in a different philosophical sense. According

-
1. Pehla paṇi jiu hai jīt hariā sabh koi (Vār Āsā M. I, p. 472)
 2. Haumai vic jag upje purkhā . . . (Siddha Goshta, p. 946)
 3. Hau vic āiā hau vic gaiā . . . (Vār Āsā M. I, p. 466)

to them it means 'Indescribable' (*Anirvachani*). Brahman is '*Shūnya*', because it cannot be adequately described by any category of intellect. The world is '*Shūnya*' because it is neither existent nor non-existent. In this sense, everything is *Shūnya*. The word '*Shūnya*' has been used by Guru Nanak in his poetry for both Brahman and the world. The Guru says that Brahman was in abstract meditation. He, the unfathomable, was absorbed in Himself. He created and saw his own *Qudrat* (Nature). *Shūnya* was created from *Shūnyatā*. Air and water were created from *Shūnya*. He puts his light *i.e.* soul in the body of grosser elements consisting of fire and water. The power of creation was in *Shūnya*. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were created from *Shūnya*. In all the ages, there was *Shūnya*. He, who understands this state is a perfect person, the superstition vanishes on meeting Him. The seven seas were created from *Shūnya* . . . The sky with sun and moon was created from *Shūnya* . . . The earth and sky were created from *Shūnya* . . . All the divisions of creation and sound have their origin in *Shūnya*. They have been born from *Shūnya* and will merge in *Shūnya* . . . The day and night were created from *Shūnya* . . . The seven nether-worlds were created from *Shūnya* . . . The ten *avatars* took their birth from *Shūnya* . . .¹

Then, what is '*Shūnya*' according to Guru Nanak ? It has the same sense of 'indescribable', in which the Madhyamikas have used this word. In *Siddh Goshta*, Guru Nanak has himself given a clarification about

1. Sun kalā aprampār dhāri . . .

(Mārū M. I, p. 1037)

‘*Shūnya*’ : “*Shūnya* is within us, *Shūnya* is outside; there is *Shūnya* in all the three worlds. The one who understands *Shūnya* in the fourth state, he is above vice and virtue. He knows the secret of *Shūnya*, which pervades in every heart . . . Everybody speaks of *Shūnya*, but wherefrom has this immortal *Shūnya* originated ? What type of persons are they, who meditate on immortal *Shūnya* ? They are just like their Creator”.¹

There are some passages in the poetry of Guru Nanak which state that the world has been born with the *Hukm* (order, judgment) of the Lord. The Guru says, “One comes with His *Hukm* and merges with His *Hukm*. The created world is visible with His *Hukm*. All the three worlds (sky, earth and nether-world) were created with His *Hukm*. The *Shakti* is wielded with His *Hukm* . . .”² In *Japji* the Guru says, “Everything is in His *Hukm* and none is outside it”.³

Thus we see that the origin of the universe is due to the Divine Will of the creator; His *Hukm* is supreme. He is the creator of *Purusa* and *Prakriti* both and of *Mahat* and *Ahamkara* and their evolutes. The sole cause of the origin of the universe is *Para-Brahman*, who was in abstract meditation or *Shūnyatā* before the creation; and when it was His will, He as *Lower Brahman* or *Ishwara*

1. Antari sunnang bāhari sunnang . . . (Siddha Goshta, p. 943)

2. Hukme āiā hukmi samāiā . . . (Mārū M. I, p. 1037)

3. Hukmai andari sabhu ko bāhari hukam nā koi (Japji, p. 1)

or *Shūnya* created the universe. No time or date of the creation can be fixed. The creation has a beginning but the creator is without any beginning. The creation has been termed as the *līlā* or sport of the Lord, who is not a spectator from a distance, but He is Immanent. He is within His creation and pervades it everywhere.

Cosmology

The question arises about the extent of the creation. Broadly speaking, there are three worlds *i.e.* the sky, our earth and the nether-world. Our earth has been called *Mātlok* or *Mrit lok* *i.e.* the region of death. The sky is also called *Surg* or heaven. The Hindus believe in *Chaudah Bhuvan* and the Muslims believe in *Chaudah Tabak*. They hold that there are seven skies and seven planes in the nether-world. According to Hindus *Bhur*, *Dyaus* (*Bhuvar*), *Swar*, *Mahat*, *Janas* *Tapas* and *Satyas* are the seven skies or upper worlds and *Atala*, *Vitala*, *Nitala*, *Gobhastimat*, *Mahatala*, *Sutala* and *Patāla* are the seven nether-worlds. Hindus and Muslims both have different concepts about the constitution, inhabitants etc. of the upper and nether planes, about which we are not concerned here. Both the religions present the concept of delimited creation of the Infinite Lord. Guru Nanak did not accept their stand. Therefore, he said, "There are lakhs of nether-worlds and lakhs of skies. Even the Vedas declare unanimously that the ends of the creation cannot be determined. The eighteen thousand shlokas of Bhagavat Purana and the Muslim scriptures

say that there is only one Reality. He is unaccountable. Those who make an account of His creation destroy themselves. The Lord is great, He alone knows His greatness".¹

Modern Scientists like Hoyle and Gold believe that the universe is expanding and with regard to time and space it is infinite. The same view was held by Guru Nanak about four and a half centuries earlier. He was against the idea of delimiting the creation of the Infinite Lord. He believed in evolution and did not believe in the idea that the whole universe was created at one particular moment. Whereas modern scientists believe in the infinity of space, they also believe that there are millions of solar systems. Guru Nanak gave such thoughts about four and a half centuries earlier. He said, "There is no end to His creation . . . Nobody can know his limits, the more we see, the more they extend . . . only He knows His greatness".²

Guru Nanak has talked of five planes.³ The first plane is the plane of piety (Dharam Khand), which is our earth. The second plane is the plane of knowledge. About this plane the Guru says, "There are innumerable airs, waters, fires *Krishnas*, (*Vishnus*) *Shivas*, *Brahmas*, *Karma-bhumīs*, mountains, *Dhruvas*, *Indras*, moons, suns, spheres, countries, *Siddhas*, *Buddhas*, *Nathas*, goddesses, gods, demons, *munīs*

1. Pātāla Pātāl lakh āgāsā āgās . . .

(Japji, p. 5)

2. Ant na jāpai kitā ākār . . .

(Japji, p. 5)

3. See *A Critical Study of Japji*.

gems, oceans, divisions of creation and sound, kings and believers in scriptures in this plane. There is no end of them. "The third plane is the plane of effort or the plane of beauty where the mind and intellect are beautified. The fourth plane is the plane of Grace or the plane of strength. This plane is out of the sphere of death. Only the strong and beautiful reside in this plane. They are the real devotees of the Lord and are always in bliss. The fifth and the last plane is the plane of Truth, which contains countless regions, spheres and universes.

A closer examination of these five planes reveals that the Infinite Lord encloses Himself with the Infinite creation. Brahmas, Vishnus and Shivas are innumerable and work under the direction of the Lord. Each solar system has its own Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. It means that the powers of creation, preservation and destruction work in every sphere of creation. We know only of four divisions of creation *i. e.* *Andaja* (the creation from eggs), *Jeraju* (the creation of animals), *Svetaja* (the creation from heat and moisture) and *Udibhuj* (vegetation). We know of four divisions of speech *i.e.* *Parā*, *Pasanti*, *Madhmā* and *Vaikharī*, but Guru Nanak talks of innumerable divisions of creation and speech.

The whole created world is *Qudrat* (Nature) of *Qādir* (Creator). There are innumerable species of different names and colours in our world. As has been said above, there is no limit or end of the worlds. All the forces of nature are moving in the

fear of the Lord. "The planets move under His fear. The wind moves in His fear. Lakhs of rivers flow in His fear. The fire labours in His fear. The earth is overburdened in His fear. Indra walks with his head downwards in His fear. The King of Death moves in His fear. The sun and moon are in His fear. They move millions of miles without end."¹ All the created things work in wonder. "The wind moves in wonder, the water flows in wonder, the fire labours in wonder. The earth and the division of creation are in wonder. The sense of wonder prevails everywhere."¹

The Guru proclaims in wonder : "Of Purushas, trees, holy places, river banks, clouds, fields, of continents, of planets, of spheres, of regions, of universes, of *Andaj*, *Jeraju*, *Svetaja*, *Udibhuja*, of seas, mountains, Jīvas—He only knows their limit. After creating all the Jīvas, he preserves them. The creator, who has created the world, has the good of every one in His mind. The Lord who has created the world thinks of all the Jīvas—I bow before Him in obeissance. His court is eternal".²

But the question arises as to who is the prop of all the created worlds and *Jīvas*. It is the Lord Himself. His cosmic law works everywhere. His *Hukm* may be interpreted as the cosmic law. Every created thing works under this cosmic law. There is

1. See *A Critical Study of Āsā ki Vār* in Appendix I.

2. *Purkhā birkhā tirathā tattā meghā khetāh* . . .

(*Vār Āsā M. I*, p. 467)

no mythological Bull which carries the earth on its head. If there is a Bull, then its feet must be resting on another earth, and then there must be another bull supporting that earth. In this way there will be no end of the bulls and the earths.¹ Therefore the Guru argues that it is only the cosmic law by which every planet runs in its orbit; even the sky is there without the pillars.

The non-temporal and non-spatial Lord has created the world of Time and Space. The change is the spice of life. After the span of life, death is a 'must' . . . The *Jīva*, according to its actions, changes its shape and surroundings. It may move from country to country, planet to planet, from plane to plane, from sphere to sphere. There are eighty-four lakhs of *yonīs* in our world, the human being the most superior of all. He may fall to the lower plane of animals and even rise to the higher planes where it can become a god. The world of time and space or the ocean of *Samsāra* can be crossed by following the required discipline enunciated by the Guru-soul.

Whatever has been created is prone to death. The old worlds die and the new ones rise in their place. There was a time when there was only One, and there will be a time when there will be only One. This cycle of creation and dissolution goes on. The *Utpati* (creation) is followed by *Pralaya* (dissolution). It all happens under the Divine Will.

1. Dharti horu parai horu horu . . .

(Japji, p. 3)

The world is not everlasting; therefore, it is called false (*Mithyā* and *Kūr*). Only the Lord is True or Ever-existent. This has led to the thought that there is nothing except the Lord. The world is only a deception and illusion. While emphasising the transitory aspect of the world (*Jagat*, *Samsāra*), the Guru has rejected the idea of illusion. For him the world is the abode of the Lord. Since the Lord is True, the world is also relatively true. He accepted 'Brahm Satyam' but to him the world is false only with regard to its transitoriness. He has not accepted the stand of Shankara that the world appears as such through *avidyā*. Thus it is not an illusion but real. He says, "O Lord, Thy regions are real, Thy universes are real, Thy planets are real, Thy creations are real".¹

1. Sace tere khand sace brahimanda . . .

(Āsā kī Vār M. I, p. 469)

Chapter VII
GURU NANAK AND WORLD RELIGIONS
(Indian)

Guru Nanak travelled through all the regions of India and visited nearly all the important religious centres. There were three main religions of India viz. Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. Hinduism was further divided into six schools of philosophy and various cults. A study of these philosophies and cults will be made in the succeeding chapters in the light of the observations made by the Guru in his hymns. Hinduism is the Vedic religion and Jainism and Buddhism reject the authority of the Vedas. They took their birth as a reaction to Brahmanism. They are known as heterodox faiths along with *Charvaka* thought, whereas Hinduism is orthodox.

Hinduism

Hinduism is also known as *Sanatan Dharma* or Vaidika Dharma i.e. the ancient and revealed religion. It accepts the authority of the Vedas. Originally it was a polytheistic faith, but gradually it became monotheistic. The four Vedas are the *Rg-Vedā*, the *Sāma-Veda*, the *Yajur-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda*. Each Veda consists of four parts i.e. *Mantra*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Āraṇyaka* and *Upanishad*. The

Mantras present the first stage of the Vedic thought wherein prayers are offered to different deities. The *Brāhmanas* contain the formulas of sacrificial rites. The *Āranyakas* are the forest treatises, which give philosophical interpretation of the rituals. The *Upanishads* are the revelations of the spiritual truth. These four parts of the Vedas are associated with the four stages of life i.e. *Mantras* are meant for *Brahmacharya*, the *Brāhmanas* for *Grihastya*, the *Āranyakas* for *Vānaprastha* and the *Upanishads* for *Sannyās*. The first two parts of the Vedas constitute the ritual section, which is known as *Karma Kānda*. The third part is known as meditation section or the *Upāsana Kānda*. The fourth and the final part is called knowledge section or *Giān Kānda*.

Guru Nanak has mentioned all the four Vedas in one of his hymns in *Āsā ki Vār*, wherein he has put them in the following order : Sāma-Veda, Rg-Veda, Yajur-Veda and Atharva-Veda. He writes :

Sāma says that the Lord is white
He comes in Truth, lives in Truth
and everything merges in Truth.

Rg says that He is Omnipresent
His Name is the most mighty deity.

The sins are vanquished by the remembrance of the Name
And then the release is obtained, saith Nanak.

In (the period of) Yajur Veda, Krishna of the Yadava
race was born

Who took away Chandrawati (*a gopi*) by force.

And brought *pāriiāt* (the wish-fulfilling tree) for the Gopi,

And manifested his love in Vrindavan.

The Veda of the *Kaliyuga* is Atharva

The Name of God is Allah,

The blue clothes are worn and the Turks and Pathans rule (the country).

All the four Vedas are truthful

Those who study and ruminate can discriminate between good and bad.

Those who are humble with love and devotion

Obtain the final emancipation, saith Nanak.

(Āsā kī Vār, Paurī 13, shlok 2)

According to Guru Nanak, the *Sāma-Veda* is the Veda of *Satyuga*, *Rg*, the Veda of *Treta*, *Yajur*, the Veda of *Dvapara*, and *Atharva*, the Veda of *Kaliyuga*. But Guru Nanak has rejected the *Karma Kānda* and *Upāsana Kānda* of the Vedas. He lays emphasis on the *Giān Kānda*. (See 'Mysticism of Guru Nanak'.)

The Vedas are known as *Shruti*. Besides *Shruti*, the Hindu scriptures include *Smritis* which include *Itihasas*, *Puranas*, *Agamas*, *Shastras* of philosophy and ritual etc. The two great epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are *Itihasas*. There are eighteen *Maha Purānas* and eighteen *upa-Purānas*. The theological treatises of various Hindu cults are known as *Agamas*. There are six *Shastras* of Hindu philosophy and several law books called *Dharma-Shastras*. Guru Nanak has expressed his view that the scriptures of

Hindus (Vedas) and non-Hindus (Kitebs) have not been able to know Brahman completely, who is without father, mother, son and brother.¹

Hinduism is *Varha-Ashrama Dharma* i.e. it believes in *Varnas* (i.e. castes) and *āshramas* (i.e. stages of life). But the Guru has laid emphasis on the equality of all human beings. He has rejected the barriers of caste and the divisions of life. He has stressed the necessity of leading a householder's life. Therefore, the basis of the ethics of Hinduism and Sikhism is different. But the five cardinal virtues i.e. purity, self-control, detachment, truth and non-violence, which are to be cultivated by all Hindus, have been considered essential for his disciples by the Guru.

Hinduism believes in the theory of *Karma* and the doctrine of rebirth. The Guru has accepted these doctrines, but he has laid emphasis on the doctrine of Grace. The choice of the right path is the beginning of Grace. There is freedom of will in the choice of the path. The rigid law of *Karma* leaves no scope for social service, but the Guru says that one gets a seat of honour in the court of the Lord because of service.

Guru Nanak was born and bred in the Hindu fold; therefore, he has said much about Hindu

1. Bed Kitebi bhed nā jānā nā tisu māt, pitā, sut, bhrātā.

(Mārū M, I, p. 1021)

institutions, precepts and doctrines, rituals and sacraments. He has strongly rejected *yagyopavita* or the Hindu ceremony of sacred thread (*Janeū*) which initiates the Hindu into the spiritual world. He has talked against all ideas regarding external impurities. According to him, the sacred fount of purity lies within us. For him the remembrance of the Name of the Lord is the holy pilgrimage.

As has been said above, the Guru also met Charvakas, Jainas and Buddhists of his times during his journeys in India. The word 'Charvaka' is used for an outright materialist who has no faith in the world of spirit. He does not believe in God, in soul, in the next world and in the theory of Karma. For him the only end of human life is enjoyment and the liberation is attained on death. Whatever exists, it is constituted of four elements *i.e.* earth, water, fire and air. The motto of a Charvaka is "Eat, drink and be merry". Therefore he believes only in two human values *i.e.* *Kama* (Sexual pleasure) and *Artha* (wealth). The thought of the Guru has nothing in common with Charvaka philosophy like other Indian philosophical systems.

The other two heterodox faiths with which the Guru came into contact are Jainism and Buddhism. He visited the Jaina centres in Gujarat and the Buddhist centres in Bihar, Ceylon, Tibet, China, etc.

Jainism

Mahavira, the twenty-fourth Tirthankara, is considered as the founder of Jainism. He was a

contemporary of Buddha, *i.e.* he was born about two thousand years before the advent of Guru Nanak. The Jainas of the early sixteenth century attracted the notice of the great Guru. He found them divided into two main sects *i.e.* Shvetambra and Digambras.¹ The former wore white clothes and the latter remained naked. The latter were very rigid in their practices. They used to rake up their night soil, breathe continuously, keep off from water, pluck their hair, drink impure water, and eat impure food obtained by begging. They always remained dirty and remorseful and did not attend congregations. They moved in a queue with cups hanging by their waist and dusters in their hands. They did all this because of *Jīva*-mania. In order to save the minutest *Jīvas* they passed very unhygienic lives. The Guru told them : “God kills *Jīvas* and gives them life. None else can save them”. Therefore he advised the Jain monks to desist from unhealthy practices.² The Digambras maintained that women could not obtain liberation, but the Guru ridiculed this idea by saying that every human being attains unity with the Lord by following the path

Jainism believes in the doctrines of *Anekāntavāda* and *Syādvāda*. The first is the doctrine of manyness of reality and the second the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge. The doctrine of *Anekāntavāda*

1. The word “Digambra” occurs in the verses of Guru Nanak

2. Siru khohae piāhi malvāni . . . sat catte sir chāi

(Vār Mājh, shlok 149-50)

manifests Jaina metaphysics, according to which the two distinct realities of matter (*Pudgala*) and Spirit (*Jīva*) are split into innumerable atoms and souls respectively. The doctrine of *Syādvāda* manifests Jaina epistemology, according to which human knowledge and human judgments are all relative and limited. *Syādvāda* is also sometimes interpreted as the theory of probability.

Jainism believes in two categories *i.e.* Jīva and Ajīva. Ajīva includes matter (*pudgala*), space (*ākāsha*), motion (*dharma*), rest (*adharma*) and time (*kāl*).

In Jainism liberation means the extinction of Karma. The soul is bound when it unites with the Karmic matter. The flow of the Karmic particles towards the soul is called *Asrava* (flow). The soul is bound when these particles infiltrate into the soul. This state is called *Bandha* (bondage). The Karmic influx is stopped through right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. This state of stoppage is called *Samvara*. After stoppage of the influx, the existing Karmas are exhausted. This state is known as *Nirjara* (wearing out). With the exhaustion of the last particle of Karma, the final state of *Moksha* (liberation) is attained. The liberated soul becomes *Kevala--Jnani* or omniscient. The above-mentioned five states together with Jīva, Ajīva, Virtue (*Punya*) and Vice (*Pāp*) constitute the nine categories of Jainism. The right faith, right knowledge and right conduct are called *Tri-Ratna* or the three Jewels of Jainism.

Jaina brotherhood is constituted of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. They all have a spiritual discipline, which is rigidly followed by monks and nuns. This discipline consists of five vows of *Ahimsa* (non-injury through mind, speech and action), *Satya* (truth), *Asteya* (not to steal), *Brahmacharya* (abstention from self-indulgence) and *Aparigraha* (renunciation). In the case of laymen, these vows are modified and liberalised.

A close study of the tenets of Jainism shows that it is an ethical teaching. Its aim is the liberation of the soul from Karmic matter, but the teachings of Guru Nanak take us to the spiritual domain, where we attain unity with Godhead. Jainism is a religion without God. This is the basic difference between Jainism and Sikhism. The religious practices of Jains, as we have seen above, have been rejected by the Guru. For the Guru, liberation is merger in the Absolute, but in Jainism liberation is the extinction of Karma.

Buddhism

The word 'Buddha' occurs several times in the verses of Guru Nanak. It pertains to Boddhisattva who appeared as prince Siddhartha on Indian soil in the sixth century before Christ. Siddhartha, or Gautama Buddha, taught the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path and the doctrine of Pratityasmutpāda (Dependent Origination).

The Four Noble Truths are :

1. That there is suffering;

2. That there is a cause of suffering;
3. That there is cessation of suffering; and
4. That there is a way leading to the cessation of suffering.

The Eightfold Path consists of — 1. right faith 2. right resolve 3. right speech 4. right action 5. right living 6. right effort 7. right thought and 8. right concentration.

The doctrine of Pratityasmutpāda is related to two Noble Truths, the Second and the Third; therefore, it deals with *Samsāra* and *Nirvāna* both. From one angle it is *Samsāra* and from the other it is *Nirvāna*. Everything appears relative, conditioned and dependent. It hangs between nothingness and reality or between nihilism and eternalism. This is Buddha's middle path. On the one hand there is life of pleasure and on the other the life of mortification. The middle path brings enlightenment.

The two major sects of Buddhism are Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. Hīnayāna or the 'Lesser Vehicle' confined its salvation to a select few, but Mahāyāna or the 'Greater Vehicle' extended salvation to a much larger number of people. Hīnayāna is agnostic idealism and follows the simple morality of Buddha, but Mahāyāna is a speculative theistic system and sophistic nihilism. The goal in Hīnayāna is *Arhat*-hood and a negative cessation of misery, but the goal of Mahāyāna is a positive state of bliss. Hīnayāna's 'Arhat' believes in personal salvation but Mahāyāna's

Bodhisattva wants salvation for all. The *Nirvāna* of Hīnayāna is negative and individualistic and of Mahāyāna positive and universal. Hīnayāna is dry asceticism but Mahāyāna believes in selfless service of humanity.

Shūnyavāda is one of the most important schools of Buddhism. The followers of the Middle Path or Madhyamikas belong to this school. According to them *Shūnya* is not 'empty void'; it means 'indescribable'. The world and the Absolute both are *Shūnya*, because the world is neither existent nor non-existent and the Absolute is transcendental. Thus everything is *Shūnya*.

Buddhism, like Jainism, is a religion without God. Karma takes the place of God in Hīnayāna. According to Hīnayāna the soul does not transmigrate, only the 'character' transmigrates. Karma does not depend upon any divine power.

Gradually, several other schools arose in Buddhism and image-worship became prevalent. About 500 A.D. the pantheistic cult of Yoga was imported in Buddhism. About the end of sixth century A.D. Tantrism influenced Buddhism. In the next three or four centuries a new school of 'magic circles' developed in Buddhism which is known as Mantrayāna (The Spell Vehicle). In the tenth century A.D. and later Mantrayāna developed into new schools called Kalachakrayāna, Vajrayāna (The Thunderbolt Vehicle) and Sahajayāna.

Buddhism spread in several other countries, including Tibet, China, Burma, Ceylon, Japan etc., where it still retains its force, though in India it has lost its hold due to several opposing movements. When we make a closer study of the life and mission of Guru Nanak, we find that the Guru journeyed to nearly all those places, where Buddhism had spread and preached his mission to the people. The Guru agreed with the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, but he rejected the agnosticism, image-worship and asceticism of Buddhism. According to him liberation can only be attained through the Grace of the Lord. Nirvāna of Buddhism falls much below the spiritual ideal of the Guru. For the Guru the final emancipation consists not only in the cessation of misery, but also in the merger in the Absolute.

In his poem *Siddha Goshta*, the Guru has elucidated his concept of *Shūnya*. There is *Shūnya* inside, and in the three worlds, but the knowledge of *Shūnya* in the fourth state i.e. *Turiyā* is essential. The secret of the immortal *Shūnya* can only be known through the remembrance of the Name of the Lord.

Chapter VIII
GURU NANAK AND WORLD RELIGIONS
(Middle Eastern)

During his journey in the Middle East, the Guru visited Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Russo-Turkistan and Afganistan. In these countries he met the followers of the Middle Eastern religions. Though he came into contact with the Muslims from his very childhood in India, he wanted to meet their great leaders and divines in Mecca, Medina and Baghdad, the main centres of Islam. Islam was the main religion of the countries mentioned above, but three other religions had been born and bred in this area, viz. Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity; therefore the Guru must have visited their centres and held discussions with the adherents of these religions also.

Judaism

Judaism is the oldest of the four religions mentioned above. It is the parent of two widespread faiths, *i.e.* Christianity and Islam. Jerusalem is its main centre. During the first century of the Christian Era this city was captured by the Romans and the Jewish Temple was destroyed. The Jews were scattered in different cities. A great number of them settled in Alexandria and in course of time they

became hellenized. Therefore, the Old Testament in Hebrew had to be translated into Greek. For the Jews who got scattered over Europe, the scripture had to be translated into Latin.

There were colonies of Jews in nearly all the important cities in the Middle Eastern countries during the Middle Ages. Christianity was hostile to Judaism and Jews were persecuted in Christian countries on occasions of religious excitement but the Mohammedans treated them humanely. Therefore in the Muslim countries, the Jews contributed to the advancement of culture and civilization.

It was most probably at Jerusalem that the Guru met the leading theologians of Judaism.

Judaism is the religion of the chosen people of Israel. It is based upon two principles—monotheism and the choice of Israel. There is one and only one God, who is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, just and gracious. He has created men in his own image, who can attain perfection through love and grace of the Lord. Judaism presents a system of human conduct and a law of righteousness, which man should follow in order to live thereby. There is no need of any mediator. Idolatry and polytheism are rejected. The purpose of human life is service. Self-effacement is considered a sin. Self-sacrifice is a virtue.

The soul is the breath of God, and like God it is immortal. The universe was created out of nothing by the eternal God by uttering the Word. Since

God is good, his creation is also good. There is no devil and no hell. Whosoever goes beyond the Will of the Lord, he commits a sin. Evil springs up when one leaves the godly path and follows his senses. The existence of this evil is a test for the human being. He has to overcome it by following the Jewish system of human conduct. The Name of the Lord is holy and it must not be uttered in order to protect it from profanation. Man has been given free-will in the choice of the path. The sincere and selfless prayer takes us near the Lord. Repentance for sins, love for God and service of humanity are necessary for an individual.

Moses was the first law-giver of Judaism. The Lord gave ten commandments through him to his chosen people. These commandments are the foundation of morality. The book of Moses is known as *Taurat* (or *Torah*) or the Old Testament and the Book of David is known as *Zabūr*. These two books have been included among the four scriptures of the Middle East, the others being *Injīl* (the Bible or the New Testament) and the *Quran*, the scriptures of Christians and Muslims respectively. Guru Nanak has referred to these scriptures as *Kiteb*, i.e. the "holy books".

Guru Nanak believed in the unity of all humanity. All human beings are the children of God. God never gives preference to any people over others. No one will cross the ocean of *Samsāra* without the fear of the Lord.¹ Everybody

1. Bhai bin koi nā langasi pāri

(Gauri M. I, p. 151)

begs of Him and He reciprocates in his own way.¹ He is within everybody;² therefore He is for everybody and for all people. Thus no nation can be called a "Chosen people"; no land is sacred for the Lord, because He is present everywhere.³ For God-realisation God's Name is Supreme. Our tongue should utter the Name, because it will make us pure. It removes the dirt of ego. But the Name can only be known from the preceptor or the mediator. He shows us the path and gives us the light of knowledge.

There are several common points also. Both Judaism and Sikhism are monotheistic faiths and both reject idolatry and polytheism. Both agree on a system of human conduct and law of righteousness, but the religion of Guru Nanak presents a metaphysics and a mysticism which Judaism lacks. It was at a very later date (in about thirteenth century) that a mystical movement became manifest in Judaism, but this mysticism was limited to hidden meanings of scriptural words and numbers. The spiritual heights mentioned by Guru Nanak do not find a place in Judaism. The Jewish religion established a priestly theocratic society, but Guru Nanak raised a strong voice against priesthood and established a common brotherhood for the whole of

-
1. Sarbe jacik tū Prabhu dātā dāti kare apunai bicār
(Gūjri M. I, p. 504)
 2. Sarb nirantari āpe āp
(Āsā M. I, p. 412)
 3. Jahi dekhā tahi soi
(Āsā M. I, p. 420)

humanity. Judaism is ritualistic while Sikhism is mystic in character.

Zoroastrianism

The religion propounded by Zoroaster (Zarathustra) in ancient Persia is known as Zoroastrianism. The scripture of this religion is *Zend Avesta* which includes *Gathas*, said to have been written by the prophet (Zoroaster) himself. According to Zoroaster there are two primal spirits: *Ahura Mazdā* and *Ahriman*. *Ahura Mazdā* is the Wise Lord and *Ahriman* is the Evil Spirit. These two spirits "revealed themselves in vision as twins (and) are the Better and the Bad in thought, word and action. And between these two the wise know to choose aright, the foolish not so". (Ys. xxx). *Ahura Mazdā* or the Holy spirit manifests righteousness and *Ahrimān*, the Evil spirit, manifests wickedness. The physical aspect of *Ahura Mazdā* is light and that of *Ahrimān* darkness. The moral aspect of *Ahura Mazdā* is truth and that of *Ahrimān* falsehood. *Spenta Mainyu* is another holy spirit that works for *Ahura Mazdā* and its opposite spirit is *Angra Mainyu* that works for *Ahrimān*.

There is mention of other spirits in Zoroastrianism. *Vohu Mahnah* (Good Mind) is said to be the son of *Ahura Mazdā*. One of the seven archangels (Holy Immortals—*Amesha spentas*) is *Asha Vahishta* (Best Righteousness). The soul is called 'Urvān', the guardian spirit 'fravashi' and the conscience 'daena'. The human being has freedom of will

and will be responsible for his good or bad works. Daena helps him to choose the path and greets the Urvān in the other world. Fravashis are the divine doubles of human beings.

Ahura Mazdā is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient. He creates and sustains his creation. He has many attributes. He is true friend, just king and merciful father. He will ultimately prevail and the world will be led to perfection. Ahrīmān will acknowledge his defeat in the end and the warfare between good and evil will cease.

The dualism of Zoroastrianism was rejected by Guru Nanak. The Guru believed in One and only One God, who is the creator of both good and evil forces. In *Japjī*, the Guru has given an account of the human creation both good and bad and bowed before the creator of both the classes of creation. (Pauris 17,18) In Zoroastrian temples the holy fire is always kept burning in an Urn. Every home has a sacred fire. The Zoroastrians are called fire-worshippers. Guru Nanak visited several temples of fire-worshippers in the Middle East during his journeys and preached his mission to the priests. He was averse to all types of ritualism. He has made a mention of the method of the disposal of the dead adopted by Zoroastrians in their Towers of Silence. He says :

Some are burnt, some are cremated, some are eaten by dogs,

Some are thrown in the water and some in the dry wells
(Towers of Silence).

But nothing is known where the souls go.

(p. 648-Raga Sorath Vār M. IV Shlok of M.III/M.I)†

When Persia was conquered by Muslims in the seventh century, Zoroastrians were declared as '*Kāfirs*'; therefore, they were persecuted. Many of them migrated to India and settled in Gujarat state where the Guru might have visited their habitations. Since the Zoroastrians came from Persia or 'Faras', they are called 'Parsis' in India. Most of them have now settled in Bombay. They still continue the practice of putting the dead bodies in the Towers, where the corpses are eaten by vultures.

Zoroastrianism is said to have influenced Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It has been mentioned above that the parent religion of Christianity and Islam is Judaism.

Christianity

Guru Nanak met Christians not only in the Middle East, but also in Kerala in India. Though no evidence is available, it is thought probable that Guru Nanak visited Rome also, where he held discussions with the Pope of the period.

With the birth of Christ, the old Jewish prophecy regarding Messiah and his kingdom of God on

† This Shloka is in the name of Guru Amar Das, but in the original recension of Kartarpur, it is in the name of Guru Nanak.

earth was fulfilled. In fact, Christianity is a historical continuity of Judaism. It accepts the ethical monotheism of old Hebrew prophets. Whereas the doctrine of God in Christianity is monotheistic, it is also Trinitarian because it believes that God is the Father, Son and the Spirit. In other words God, Logos or Christ (the son of God) and the Holy Ghost constitute the Holy Trinity. There had been a great controversy regarding the interpretation of this Trinity *i.e.* "Three persons in one substance". The Son is begotten by the Father as the principle of salvation. He is the second person and co-eternal with the Father. The third person is the Holy Ghost, a supernatural being.

Christianity believes that human being is free to choose between right and wrong. Man has fallen because of the original sin. The sinful and guilty can achieve salvation through penitence, faith and love. He has to accept the grace of God in Christ and this will be instrumental in cleansing the dirt of sin. Christ is truly divine and perfect. He has filial consciousness and has undergone resurrection for the sake of humanity.

One of the prominent doctrines of Christianity is the doctrine of atonement. Christ is the saviour and makes atonement for the sins of the people. He lifts humanity and lessens the ignorance of the people. He redeems the human being by his sacrifice.

The ascension of Christ is an article of apostolic creed. With the ascension of Christ, the union of

the Son with the Father and man with God was achieved. The triple spirit became one. After the ascension, the Church was considered the body of Christ wherein resides the holy Spirit. It is, in fact, the continuation of the incarnation of Christ and his mission of revelation and redemption. It is the place of prayer. The presence of Christ is recognised in the holy congregation meeting in the Church.

The Christian church gives prominence to the Sacraments. The Roman Catholic Church recognises seven sacraments. Two of those sacraments are considered as obligatory by nearly all the Christians. They are the sacrament of Baptism and the sacrament of Eucharist. The first sacrament is the initiation and purification ceremony and the second sacrament is the symbol of eternal sacrifice. The first sacrament is performed once in a lifetime and the second one is performed daily. Water is used in the first sacrament and bread and wine in the second. The bread is the symbol for food and body and wine for blood. While taking both these articles the worshipper is supposed to partake the body and blood of Christ i.e. the nature and life of Christ. In this way he becomes one with Him.

Out of the five remaining sacraments of Roman Catholics is the sacrament of marriage. The material used in this sacrament is the ring and the sacrament is performed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Another doctrine of Christianity is the doctrine of last things. At the end of the world there will be the judgment. The blessed will be sent to heaven and the damned to hell.

There is a moral code for Christians, which has grown out of the conception of God and man. Christianity believes in the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. Love is the foremost moral. The worship of God is personal as well as congregational. The priest plays a vital role in conducting the worship.

Guru Nanak did not accept the concept of Trinity. He believes only in one God, who has no relative and who does not consult anybody. According to the Guru all the rituals and sacraments are useless. The moral plane for him is the basis for the spiritual plane about which Christianity does not say much. Much that is said of Christ in Christianity can be said of the Guru in Sikhism. But Christ is the son of God, while Guru is one who has realized Brahman. Like Christ, the Guru is present in the congregation. The resurrection and ascension are the singular doctrines of Christianity. The idea of Divine Grace is similar in both the religions, but there is no doctrine of last things in Sikhism, which believes in the law of Karma and transmigration. This law is foreign for Judaism and Christianity and also for Islam. The Christian doctrine of atonement is more or less acceptable in Sikhism.

The 'Bible' or 'New Testament' is the scripture of Christianity. It contains the revelations of several saints. The concept of creation in Christianity is the same as that in Judaism. God created the world in the following manner : "On the first day heaven and earth were created; on the second, firmament and waters; on the third, dry land, grass, the birds and fruit trees; on the fourth, lights, the sun, the moon, the stars; on the fifth, moving creatures, winged fowls, great whales; and on the sixth, living creatures, cattle, creepers, beasts, man". Thus the world was created in six days. But Guru Nanak maintained that the creation was a long process of evolution and no period or time can be fixed when a particular part of the world was created.

The Guru also rejected the institution of Papacy and the monastic order of Christianity.

Islam

Islam was the main religion of the Middle Eastern countries when Guru Nanak reached there. His discussions with the Muslim divines held at Mecca and Medina are contained in *Makke Madine di Gosht*. The Sikh theologian, Bhāi Gurdas, has also mentioned in his first Vār, the talks held by the Guru with the Muslim theologians at Mecca and Baghdad.

Islam is a monotheistic faith, but believes in the prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad. It is said,

“there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the apostle of God”. The Guru accepted the first part *i.e.* the unity of God, but did not agree with the second. He was emphatic on the point that there was no adviser of the Lord, no lieutenant, son or relative of God.

Islam lays stress on prayer, fasting, alms-giving and pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*). The Muslim should pray five times a day under all circumstances and situations. There is a prescribed prayer which the ‘faithful’ utters at sunrise, noon, early afternoon, sunset and at the fall of darkness. The Guru believed that we can pray to God at any time. The five prayers suggested by the Guru are truth, honest earning, welfare of humanity, sincerity and praise of the Lord. The Guru believes in practical life and does not like rituals and formalities. For him the faithful should have the mosque of the mercy of the Lord, the prayer-mat of faith, the Quran of honest earnings, circumcision of effort and fasting of good character.

Islam also believes in angels. The prominent among them are Gabriel, Michael, Azrael and Israfil. There are also an inferior class of beings called jin (or genii). Besides, there is also an evil power called Satan. The fall of Adam and Eve from heaven has been due to this evil power. The soul is immortal. On the day of resurrection, the dead will rise from their graves in order to receive the rewards and punishments for their actions. The bodies will be formed again from the seedbone

Al Ajb which will not be consumed by the earth like other parts of the body. On the Day of judgment, prophet Muhammad will act as an intercessor. Those with a good record will be sent to heaven, the evil ones will go to hell. There is a bridge named *Al Sirat* over the abyss of hell. It is finer than a hair and sharper than the edge of a sword. The good will cross the bridge and the evil will fall into the abyss of hell.

Islam believes, like Judaism, that the world was created out of nothing and the whole world is composed of seven skies and seven nether-worlds besides our earth. The monastic order in Christianity was rejected by the Prophet. The faithful believe that our actions are predestined and that there is Divine Justice.

The concepts of the day of resurrection and of creation have not been accepted by Guru Nanak. The Guru believed that there were the matter and the finite selves within Brahman before the creation and it is wrong to delimit the creation of the Lord. There are lakhs of skies and nether-worlds.

The place of pilgrimage for Muslims is the cube like building in the centre of the mosque at Mecca. It is known as *Kaabah*. When Guru Nanak reached Mecca, prominent Muslim divines of the time gathered there. The Guru slept in a mosque with his feet towards the *Kaabah*. One of the faithfuls named Jiwan saw this in the early hours of the morning and admonished the Guru for this sinful

act. The Guru said that he was very much tired because of long journey and requested the person to put his feet on the other side where he thought, there was no house of God. Jiwan dragged the legs of the Guru towards the other side. And lo! a miracle occurred, the *Kaabah* revolved with the feet of the Guru. The faithfuls practically realized that the whole world is the house of God. This news spread like wild fire and the Muslim Divines gathered around the Guru. They opened their scripture (*i.e.* Quran) and questioned the Guru, "Who is greater, A Hindu or a Muslim?" The Guru replied, "Without good actions both will weep".

Then the Guru went to Baghdad with his musician Mardana. When music was sounded the faithfuls came with stones to kill the sinful strangers. The Guru sang, "There are lakhs of skies and nether-worlds". It was considered heresy because it was against the spirit of their holy scripture. The Pīr ordered his disciples to stone the strangers to death. But the hands became motionless with the effect of music. The Pīr and his disciples sat near the Guru. The Guru explained to the Pīr the merits of music. As regards the concept of the vastness of the universe, the Guru took the son of the Pīr to innumerable regions through space in order to justify the truth of his statement.†

† See Bhāi Gurdas I Vār.

Besides the holy scripture Quran, the Islamic traditions are contained in *Hadith* and the Islamic laws in *Fiqh*. The Islamic ethics lays emphasis on chastity, honesty, meekness, politeness, forgiveness, goodness, courage, veracity, patience and sympathy. There are ninety-nine names of God. Any one, who recites these names, will enter Paradise. Whereas God is *Ar-Rahmān* (The Merciful) and *Ar-Rahīm* (The Compassionate). He is also *Al-Mūzil* (The Destroyer) and *Al-Mantaqim* (The Avenger). For Guru Nanak God is Merciful and Compassionate, but not the Avenger.

Islamic mysticism manifested itself as Sufism. It took its birth as a reaction against the ritualism and cold formalism of Islam. It has been called the Muslim adaptation of the Vedanta school of Hindu Philosophy. Its thought comes near the concepts of Guru Nanak; therefore, we find that the verses of Baba Farid were included in the *Ādi Granth* by Guru Arjan. It was the Sufi Saint, Mian Mir, who laid the foundation-stone of the Golden Temple at Amritsar. Sufism raised the voice of love and toleration like Guru Nanak.

The doctrines of Sufism can be summed up in the following manner : God, the Absolute Being, is the only reality. All beings emanate from Him. He is the real author of the good and evil. He fixes the will of man. By His Grace one attains the spiritual unity with Him. The soul-bird is confined within the body-cage. It is purified by following the path with the help of *Murshid*, and by remembering the names

of God. Blind submission to a *Murshid* is a necessity.

For unity with the Lord, the Sufī has to pass through several stages. The first is called *nāsūt* (humanity) or *shariah* (to live according to the law). The second stage is *malakūt* (the nature of angels) which pertains to the path of purity (*tariqah*). The third is *jabrūt* (the possession of power pertaining to knowledge (*marifah*)). Then there is *fanā* (absorption into the deity) pertaining to Truth (*haqiqah*). These stages have a close affinity with the stages mentioned by Guru Nanak in *Japjī*. *Nāsūt* and *Dharam Khand* (the region of piety) are the same. *Malakūt* resembles *Saram Khand* (the region of effort) and *Gian Khand* (the region of knowledge) may be added to it. *Jabrūt*, or the possession of power, seems indetical with *Karam Khand* (the region of Grace) and *Fanā*, or Truth, with *Sach-Khand* (the region of Truth). There are, of course, several points of difference regarding these stages, but, at surface, there appears to be a great similarity.

Chapter IX

GURU NANAK AND WORLD RELIGIONS (Chinese and Japanese)

Guru Nanak entered the territory of Tibet and China in 1515 A.D. He traversed not only the land of Lamas, but is also said to have gone into China as far as Nanking. This city is believed to have been named after the name of the great Guru. The purpose of his visit had been the propagation of his universal faith. He was himself the first missionary of his religion. He wanted to demolish all the barriers of colour, caste and creed; therefore, he wanted to enlighten all the constituents of society about their duties towards self, society and God.

The main religions of China at the time of the Guru's visit were Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Buddhism is an Indian religion, which we have discussed in the last chapter. The religions which took their birth in China, are Confucianism and Taoism.

Confucianism

Confucianism is based on the teachings of Confucius, who was a traditionalist. He has talked more about state and society than religion. The Confucian

books include *Analects*, *The doctrine of the Mean*, *The Great Learning* and *The Book of Mencius*. Mencius was the second sage, second only to Confucius. The Confucian works are divided into two parts. Five of the works are called *King* or canons and the rest (the four mentioned above) are called *Shu* or 'the writings'. Confucius is said to have written only one *King* himself (Spring and Autumn Annals) and edited others (Historical documents of odes, of rites, of changes).

The collection of sayings attributed to Confucius is known as *Analects*. The principles of state and society are discussed in this work. Emphasis is laid on right living and good government. *The Doctrine of the Mean*, attributed to the grandson of Confucius stresses the right and reciprocal action for the healthy development of human nature. *The Great Learning*, attributed to a disciple of Confucius contains the sayings of the Master (*i.e.* Confucius). *The Book of Mencius* is the work of the second sage Mencius and may be called the first interpretation of Confucian philosophy.

Confucius laid great emphasis on the duties of the constituents of society and state. He said, "Let the ruler be ruler, the minister minister, the father father and the son son". He wanted every one to observe *li* or sacrifice or customary rite or duty. As a constituent of society, the individual should be righteous and humane. He should have a proper sense of proportion. Knowledge is essential for the superiority of an individual, but this knowledge

is about *ming* (i.e. the forces of the universe and the existing conditions).

Confucian philosophy is interested more in human relationship than a study of the universe. The ideal that it presents regarding state and society is virtue. Love, selflessness, justice, kindness etc. are some of the virtues which must be cultivated. Confucius does not bother about God and heaven. He has an ethics which is divorced from metaphysics and mysticism. He uses the word Tao for the mode of conduct for the good of the individual, the state and society.

Confucianism believes in spirits, godly (*Shen*) and demoniac (*Kwei*). The supreme universal *Shen* is *Yang*. The godly spirits like sun, moon, stars, clouds, thunder, wind, rivers, rain, mountains are its part and parcels. The universal spirit of evil is *Yin*, which is further divided into countless *Kwei*. Heaven is the chief god, who controls the spirits and their actions. Emperor is the son of heaven in this world and head of the state religion. Confucianism does not believe in any god beyond the world, who may be called its creator. Next to Heaven is Earth. The gods who constitute the *Yang* are worshipped for the happiness of the Emperor and his subjects. All the sacrifices and rituals are performed for this purpose. Besides the worship of gods, the worship of ancestors is also prevalent.

A close examination of the above thoughts of Confucianism shows that it is an ethical system,

laying down a code of conduct for individuals, society and state. Its ethics has a close resemblance with that of Guru Nanak, but it is detached from metaphysics and religion. Guru Nanak does not accept its *Shen* and *Kwei* and also its ritualism. Its concept of Heaven and Earth and other gods makes it polytheistic, but its Heaven is not something supernatural.

Taoism

Taoism is associated with Lao-Tzu. The scripture of Taoism *i.e.* *Tao-Teh King* is attributed to him. *Tao Teh King* means the Book of Tao and its Virtue. Lao Tzu was the older contemporary of Confucius. His short treatise is divided into two parts *i.e.* "Concerning Tao" and "Concerning Teh".

Tao means the eternal way. It has a metaphysical connotation also in Taoism. It is "something quite indefinite which, when we attempt to define it, it becomes nothing". "Not only is it the origin of the Universe as a whole, but it presides over all beginnings . . . doing everything, while it seems to do nothing". Thus Tao is something quite indefinite. The Universe emanates from Him, but He is not the creator. Everything is being done by Him, still He is said to be ever inactive. He is impersonal and spontaneous. He is beyond virtue and vice. He may be called nature.

Teh is said to be the outcome of *Tao*. It begins where *Tao* ends. Various virtues are the aspects of

this *Teh*.

Lao Tzu's teachings include speculations on Physiology and Politics. In connection with physiology, he has talked about long life and death. A Taoist can attain lasting life and death does not mean destruction. Regulation of breath is also suggested as a means of longevity. In connection with politics, Lao Tzu's method of government is *laissez-faire*. He talks against the luxurious life of the courtiers and exploitation of the masses. He hates war. He associates the sage with the state.

In the early stages Taoism released a quietistic philosophy of inaction which ultimately degenerated into a magical system of alchemy. As a religion, it recognises numerous natural and astral gods and good and bad spirits. The High God is called *Shang-to* or *Yu-Huang*. The next in order are Tao Chu (The Honourable Tao) and Lao-Tzu; then there are numerous supernatural beings. There are divinities of the heaven, earth, mountains, islands, hearths, doors, health, luck, trade etc. The Taoist priest plays a great part in the rituals in order to appease the divine beings.

Guru Nanak believes in one God, who is both Transcendent and immanent and who is the creator of the whole universe. Taoism presents a different concept about the ultimate reality. Its emphasis on numerous divine beings and spirits, its priestcraft and rituals do not fall in line with the thought of the Guru.

Shinto

This religion is prevalent in Japan. It is also known as *Kami-no-michi*, which means "The way of the gods". This religion is said to be a crude polytheism. The chief Shinto deity is the sun-goddess, who rules over heaven. There is no supreme deity or God. Two types of gods are worshipped *i.e.* the nature-gods and man-gods. The nature-gods include the sun-goddess, the Earth, mountain-gods, sea-gods, river-gods, the wind-god, the fire-god, the food-goddess, tree-gods and house-gods. The food-goddess is considered most important after sun-goddess. The man-gods include the popular deity of Suwa, the war-god, Hachiman and other legendary heroes. Then there are phallic deities also. Because of this diversity of gods, the priesthood plays a significant role in Shinto religion. Mikado himself is the chief priest. Worship consists of the recitation of prayers and obeisance in the shrines of gods and goddesses. People go on a pilgrimage to important shrines. Though there are some rituals and devices for purification in Shinto, there is no moral code. There are some ceremonies which are performed on different occasions.

There is an elaborate Shinto mythology. A number of gods emerged from primeval chaos. Two of them, Izanagi (male god) and Izanami (the female god), produced the Japanese islands and then begot numerous deities.

We have seen that Guru Nanak believed in one and only one God, who is the Creator, the Sustainer and the Destroyer. He has rejected all other gods. He is averse to priesthood, ritualism and ceremonies. Therefore his religion differs basically from Shinto. We have no evidence of the visit of Guru Nanak to Japan, but there is a probability that a follower or followers of Shinto might have met him during his visit to China.

The religions of China and Japan, as described above, are polytheistic, while Sikhism is monotheistic. This is the basic dissimilarity. The idea of one God presented by Guru Nanak is absent in all the three above-mentioned religions. Confucianism has a code of conduct similar to the ethics of Guru Nanak, but it is detached from metaphysics and mysticism. The main purpose of the Guru's journey to China had been his concern for the spiritual development of the individual leading to the uplift of society. He believed in the basic unity of all humanity; therefore, he wanted to propagate his universal faith in order to bring all humanity on one platform and raise it above the notions of colour and caste.

Chapter X

GURU NANAK AND THE SIX SYSTEMS OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY

Guru Nanak has talked of six ways of teaching and six teachers.† Bhāi Gurdas, the first Sikh theologian, also talks of the six systems in his first Vār. He has also pointed out the rejection of these six Shastras by the Guru.* These six Shastras are Sankhya of Kapila, Yoga of Patanjali, Vaisheshika of Kanad, Nyaya of Gautama, Purva Mimansa of Jaimini and Uttara Mimansa or Vedanta of Vyasa.

These six Shastras of Hinduism are called orthodox systems as against Jainism and Buddhism, which are heterodox faiths. They are called orthodox, because they accept the authority of the Vedas. Guru Nanak seems to have met the followers and believers of all these systems during his journeys in India and brought under discussion their theories and doctrines.

These six Shastras can be combined into three pairs : the first of Sankhya and Yoga; the second of

† Chia ghar chia gur chia upadesh (Āsā M. I, p. 12)

* Khat darshan kau khediā Kaljug Nānak Bedī āi
(Bhāi Gurdas Vār I, Paurī 41)

Vaisheshika and Nyaya; and the third of Purva Mimansa and Uttara Mimansa. In each pair the first Shastra does not talk about or believe in God; therefore, they differ basically from the thought of the Guru. But there are certain points of each Shastra which are not rejected by the Guru; they find a place in his thought-system.

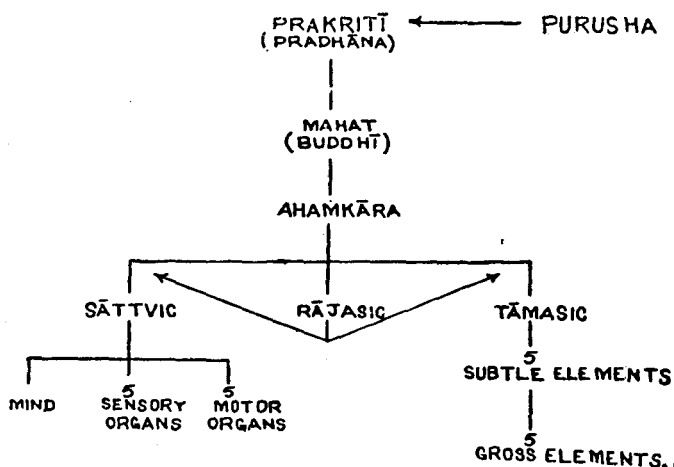
The First Pair : Sankhya and Yoga

These Shastras constitute one complete system. *Yoga Darshana* is complementary to Sankhya. The word 'Sankhya' means 'number' and also 'right knowledge'. The Shastra gives us the knowledge of the twenty-five principles. It accepts two ultimate independent realities *i.e.* *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. *Prakriti* is said to be the first principle of the universe, it is called *Pradhāna*. It is the unity of the three *Gunas* (qualities) *i.e.* *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, which are held in equilibrium. *Sattva* is rhythm, *Rajas* is activity and *Tamas* is inertia. Evolution takes place when the equilibrium of these *Gunas* is disturbed.

After *Prakriti*, the other co-eternal reality is *Purusha*. It is pure consciousness, eternal, changeless but passive. There are innumerable *Purushas*. When *Purusha* comes into contact with *Prakriti*, evolution takes place. The first product of evolution is *Mahat* or *Buddhi* (Intellect). From *Mahat*, *Ahamkāra* (ego) is produced. The mind, the five sensory organs and the five motor organs are evolved from the *Sāttvic* aspect of *Ahamkāra* (ego). The

Tāmasic aspect of *Ahamkāra* produces five subtle elements out of which the five gross elements evolve. The *Rājasic* aspect of *Ahamkāra* supplies energy for the production of the evolutes.

The above-mentioned twenty-five principles can be shown in the following manner :



The five sensory organs have the functions of sight, smell, taste, touch and sound. The five motor organs have the functions of speech, prehension, movement, excretion and reproduction. The five Tanmatras are the essence of five sensory organs *i.e.* *Rūp*, *Gandh*, *Ras*, *Sparsh* and *Shabad*. The five gross elements are Fire, Air, Water, Earth and Ether.

The first gross element is Ether or *Ākāśh*. From Ether the evolute is air, from air, fire takes its birth, from fire the evolute is water and from water

the earth takes its birth. Guru Nanak has talked of these evolutes in one of his couplets in *Srī Rāga*. Moreover, he has clearly stated in one of the stanzas of *Siddh Goshta*, in reply to a question of the Yogis, that the world has taken its birth in *Ahamkāra*. This world comes in ego and goes in ego.

The basic difference in the thought of Guru Nanak and Sankhya lies in their metaphysics. The Guru is monotheistic, while Sankhya is dualistic. The *Purusha* of Sankhya is neither Brahman nor a part of Brahman. It is an independent entity in itself. According to Sankhya the bondage is due to non-discrimination between the self and the not-self. Liberation is the cessation of pain and the realisation of the self through discrimination between *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. But the ideal of Guru Nanak is much higher : it is the unity of the self with Brahman. Brahman of Guru Nanak is the creator and his *Purusha* (soul) is active, but none is the creator in Sankhyan thought. The creation begins only when the active *Prakriti* comes into contact with the passive *Purusha*. Brahman of Guru Nanak is also *Purusha* but He is called the Primal *Purusha* (*Ādi Purakh*), Creator (*Karta Purakh*), Pure *Purusha* without the impact of *māyā* (*Niranjan Purakh*) etc. The ordinary *Purushas* (souls) are a part and parcel of this Primal *Purusha* or Brahman.

Yoga Darshana is complementary to Sankhya. They are closely allied to each other. Sankhya is called theory and Yoga practice. The metaphysics

and epistemology of Sankhya has been mostly accepted by Yoga. Yoga Darshana deals with the concept of liberation through concentration. It is known as *Raja Yoga*. Patanjali defines 'yoga' as the cessation of the modifications of *Citta* and this cessation is obtained through concentration, for which the eightfold path or discipline has been laid down. This discipline is called *Ashtanga Yoga*. It includes *Yama* (abstention from injury to others, abstention from falsehood, stealing, lust and avarice); *Niyama* (self-culture through purification, contentment, austerity, study and devotion to God); *Āsana* (steady posture); *Prānāyāma* (control and regulation of breath); *Pratyāhāra* (control of the senses); *Dharanā* (fixing the mind on the object of meditation); *Dhyāna* (meditation); and *Samādhi* (complete absorption in the object of meditation).

Several supernatural powers are obtained by regular concentration, which are to be avoided because the ideal should be liberation or *Kaivalya* i.e. absolute freedom of *Purusha* from *Prakriti*.

Yoga has made an addition to the metaphysics of Sankhya and that is the addition of Godhead. God of Yoga is a special *Purusha*, who is eternally free, who is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient and who is above the law of Karma. He is only a special *Purusha* and not the creator and liberator.

Liberation in Yoga does not mean unity with God. It is only the separation of *Purusha* from *Prakriti*. But the discipline laid down by Guru

Nanak takes the disciple above *Prakriti* or *māyā* and ensures unity with Brahman. It rejects the idea of a limited God of Yoga and describes *Prakriti* as subservient to Brahman, who is the creator. Like Yoga, it condemns the use of supernatural powers. It mentions a *yoga* of its own, which may be defined as the casting off of *māyā* or *Prakriti*, while living in the world of *māyā* (*anjan mahi niranjan*). Its *yoga* is *Sahaja yoga*, *Bhakti yoga*, *Nam yoga* or *Surt-Shabad yoga*, i.e. unity with Brahman through devotion and remembrance of the Name of the Lord.

In *Siddh Goshta*, the contemporary life of the *Yogis* has been described in the following manner :

We live far away from cities and routes and reside in
jungles

We eat the fruit of the forest . . . (Stanza 7)

The Guru has also given his own concept :

Just as the lotus remains above the water-level and the
swan swims on the water surface,

Similarly we can cross the ocean of Sansāra through
devotion and remembrance of the Name of the Lord.
(Stanza 5)

In this way, the Guru rejected the asceticism of the *yogis*. The *yogis* of the times of Guru Nanak had developed a *yoga* of nerves and circles, which was strongly rejected by the Guru. Such a *yoga* is known as *Hath yoga*. This is the *yoga* of the ascetics. But the *yoga* of the Guru is the *yoga* of householders. The formalism and outward symbols of contemporary *yogis* were emphatically rejected by the Guru.

He wants the ear-rings of contentment, the bag and bowl of effort and the ashes of meditation. The patched quilt should be of the remembrance of death, the discipline of purity and the staff of faith.

The Guru has used several yogic terms in his verses, but he interprets them in his own way. He is in favour of *Yama* and *Niyama*, but rejects *Āsanās* and *Prāṇāyāma*.

Because of his basic difference with the thought of Sankhya and Yoga, the Guru rejected them. According to Bhāi Gurdas, the Sikh theologian, the yogis of the time of the Guru wanted to bring him in their fold, but they failed in their attempt because of the rejection of most of their practices by the Guru.

The Second Pair : Vaisheshika and Nyaya

Vaisheshika system is older than Nyaya. It deals with categories (Padarathas) and unfolds atomistic pluralism. Originally it believed in six categories and the seventh category of *abhāva* was added later on. The seven categories are as follows :

1. *Dravya* (substance) : There are nine substances viz. *Prthvi* (earth), *Ap* (water), *Tejas* (fire), *Vāyū* (air), *Ākāsha* (ether), *Kāla* (time), *Dik* (space), *Atman* (spirit) and *Manas* (mind). The first five are gross elements. They, along with mind, are physical and atomic. The remaining three, along with ether,

are all-pervading and eternal. Whereas atoms are infinite in number, souls are also infinite.

2. Guna (quality). They are material as well as mental.
3. Karma (action).
4. Samānya (generality).
5. Vishesha (particularity).
6. Samavāya (inherence or inseparable internal relation).
7. Abhāva (non-existence).

While the first six categories are regarded as absolute in conception, the seventh category is relative.

The theory of creation of Vaisheshika is called the theory of atomism or *arambhvāda*. The Vaiseshika believes in the doctrine of *asatkaryāvāda* i.e. the effect does not pre-exist in its cause. According to this doctrine, the creation is a new beginning. Atoms are co-eternal with souls and they are the material cause of the world. The creation is the combination of atoms, and the destruction, their dissolution.

Kanād believes in the moral law of Karma and does not openly refer to God. According to him, the bondage is due to ignorance and liberation comes with knowledge. He admits spiritual substances among the nine dravyas; therefore, his philosophy is not materialistic, though it is pluralistic and realistic

The soul is regarded as a substance. It is like an unconscious object and receives consciousness only when it comes into contact with the body, mind and the senses. The later Pandits of the Vaisheshika system have also talked about God, but their God is not the creator, but merely a supervisor, with whom innumerable souls and atoms are co-present and co-eternal.

Such a system of categories and substances could never be acceptable to Guru Nanak. For the Guru, God is all. He creates the world and the souls are His part and parcel. The quality of consciousness of Brahman is present in the soul. Atom is not co-eternal and co-present with Brahman.

Whereas the Guru does not agree with the metaphysics and ontology of Vaisheshika, he is unconcerned with the logic and epistemology of Nyaya. Vaisheshika is concerned with the exposition of right knowledge. The Guru also stresses on the right knowledge of reality; but his concept of reality is different from both these systems. For the Guru, Brahman is the only reality, but for Vaisheshika and Nyaya systems, the categories and the substances are the realities. Vaisheshika classifies all reals under seven categories, but Nyaya classifies them under sixteen. The seven categories of Vaisheshika come under the second category *i.e.* *Prameya* (knowable). The first category of Nyaya is *Pramān* or the valid means of knowledge.

According to Nyaya, there are four separate *Pramānas viz.* : perception, inference, comparison

and verbal testimony. Vaisheshika recognises only the first two. Nyaya believes that the same cause produces the same effect and the same effect is produced by the same cause. This is known as the theory of causation. This law of causation is subservient to the law of Karma. Nyaya believes like Vaisheshika that the eternal atoms are the material cause of the world and God is the efficient cause. Infinite souls and atoms are co-eternal with God. Creation occurs with the combination of atoms, and destruction with their dissolution. God is not the creator, but the moral governor of all beings. The soul is not consciousness. It is something different from God, the Higher-Soul.

Nyaya has given several arguments in order to prove the existence of God. One of them is that atoms themselves are inactive and cannot form different combinations without the motion given by God. Another argument is that the world is an effect and it must have an efficient cause *i.e.* God. Another argument is that we have to reap the fruit of our actions. Merit and demerit come out from our actions. The stock of merit and demerit is *Adrsta i.e.* the unseen power. But this unintelligent unseen power requires the guidance of infinitely intelligent God. The Guru has rejected these arguments. For him there is no need to prove the existence of God. He considers God as Truth in the beginning, Truth in the present, and Truth in the future.

The Third pair : Purva Mimansa and Uttara Mimansa (Vedanta)

Pūrva Mimansa is also called Karma Mimansa and Dharma Mimansa because it deals with the earlier portion of the Vedas called *Karma Kānda*. Uttara Mimansa is also called Jnana Mimansa or Brahm Mimansa, because it deals with the later portion of the Vedas known as *Gian Kānda*. It is also called Vedanta.

Pūrva Mimansa considers the Veda as eternal and attaches the greatest significance to the Brahmana portion of the Veda. It admits three *Pramānas* i.e. perception, inference and verbal testimony. Verbal testimony gets the greatest importance. The Vedas deal with Dharma and their injunctions can never be contradicted. They are self-revealed and self-valid. They have both positive and negative injunctions i.e. *vidhī* and *nishedha*, whose performance is religious duty or Dharma. The positive commands include *nitya karmas* (obligatory duties), *naimittika karmas* (occasioned rites) and *kamya karmas* (optional rites). The performance of *nitya* and *naimittika karmas* does not bring any merit, but their non-performance brings demerit. But the performance of *kamya karmas* brings merit.

By performing *vidhīs* and refraining from *nishedhas* one can avoid demerit. For obtaining release, the performance of *nitya karmas* is essential. By fulfilling the obligations one becomes pure and gets release.

In order to preserve the sanctity and integrity of the Vedas, Pūrva Mimamsa does not assign any place to God. The only important thing in Mimamsa is the performance of sacrifices. The duties for which the sacrifices are offered, have no significance.

We have already seen that Guru Nanak is against all formalism and ritualism; therefore, he has rejected the line of Pūrva Mimamsa outright. Guru Nanak says in *Japji* that though the body takes its birth because of karmas, the final emancipation is obtained through the Grace of the Lord.

Uttara Mimamsa or the later Mimamsa is also called Vedanta. The word 'Vedanta' literally means 'the end or the final portion of the Vedas'. It pertains to Upanishads. Badarayana tried to systematise the teachings of Upanishads in *Brahma Sūtra*. The *Brahma Sūtra*, Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita constitute together the Prasthāna Treyi (the triple foundation) of Vedanta. Several commentaries have been written on these three scriptures.

Advaita (monism) is the best known system of Vedanta. Shankaracharya (788—820) is considered the first great consolidator of this system. The basic teaching of Advaita is reflected in the following saying of Shankara :

Brahm Satyam Jagan Mithhyā Jivo Brahmaiva nā parā.

It means that only Brahman is real, the world is an illusory appearance, the individual soul is Brahman alone, no other.

Shankar says the world is illusory and a mode of nescience (*avidyā*). The illusion and nescience can be removed by *Brahma-vidya* (knowledge of Brahman), which is also called *Parā-vidya* (higher wisdom). The self is Brahman and Brahman is *Neti* (not this, not this). Brahman is *Sat* (existence), *Chit* (consciousness) and *Ananda* (bliss). He is *Nirguna* (without attributes) and *Saguna* (with attributes), both. He is both the material and the efficient cause of the Universe. He is all in all. When He is related with the world He is called Ishvara. The principle responsible for the phenomenal appearance of the world is *māyā*. It is the power of God, that veils the truth. The *Jīva* or the embodied soul seeks to go beyond *māyā*. For that purpose, it has to cast off nescience with the help of true knowledge. *Tat Twam Asi* (Thou art That) is the major dictum of Shankara.

Guru Nanak visited the Shankaracharyas of Shringeri and Puri and rejected the stand of Ādi Shankaracharya about the illusoriness of the world. The Guru argued that God is omnipresent and the world in which He lives cannot be mere illusion. Though the world is transitory, it is relatively real. The Guru also accepted *Jīva*'s individuality and thus rejected the dictum : 'Tat Twam Asi'. The *Jīva* undergoes births and deaths because of its actions and this dictum leads him to passivity and he cannot get release.

The next Vedantin after Shankara is Ramanuja (1017—1137), who interpreted 'Prasthan Treyi' in his

own way. His system is known as *Vishistādvaita* or qualified monism. He maintained that Brahman is *Saguna* and thus endowed with attributes. He responds to our devotion, love and prayer. According to *Vishistādvaita*, there are three ultimate realities *i.e.* God, soul and matter. God is qualified by the souls and matter is non-dual. He is Vishnu-Narayana who incarnates in different periods in order to reform the lost souls. Before the creation, the finite souls and the matter are within Brahman and when he creates, the souls and matter both come out of Him. The souls are infinite in number. The path of final liberation lies through *Karma* (action), *Gyan* (knowledge) and *Bhakti* (devotion). The goal is achieved after death; therefore, there is no *Jiwan-mukti* in *Vishistādvaita*, the first Vaishnava school.

The next Vaishnava system was propounded by Madhva (1199—1278). His system is known as *Dvaita* because it concentrates on the concept of difference (*bheda*). It believes in the reality of the external world. It differentiates between God and soul, soul and soul, God and matter, soul and matter and one material object and another; therefore, it is a philosophy of distinctions. According to it, God, souls and the world are equally eternal. For him God is Vishnu, Narayana or Hari.

The other Vaishnava schools are *Dvaitādvaita* (dualism-non-dualism), *Shudhādvaita* (pure monism) and *Achintya-bhedābheda* (incomprehensible difference and non-difference). *Dvaitādvaita* was propounded by Nimbārka in the eleventh century A.D. For him

Brahman is Gopala Krishna accompanied by Radha. He believes that the world of souls and matter is both different and non-different from Brahman. For him the three realities *Brahman*, *chit* and *achit* are equally eternal. Vallabha (1473—1531) is the expounder of *Shuddhādvaita*. He believes that the relation between Brahman and the world is not a relation of difference-cum-non-difference, but one of pure difference. According to him, Shankara's *Advaita* is impure because, while explaining the world, it depends on *Māyā*. He accepts Krishna as the supreme reality. Along with *Prasthāna Treysi*, he believes in the scriptural authority of Bhagavata Purana. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1485—1527) is the expounder of *Achintya-bhedābheda*. Its nature is indescribable and unthinkable due to the unthinkable powers of God. It is the relation between souls and the world on the one hand and God on the other. It is the relation between cause and effect, the relation of simultaneous difference and non-difference. This is incomprehensible. For Chaitanya, Radha-Krishna is the highest reality.

Vallabha and Chaitanya were the contemporaries of Guru Nanak and the Guru might have met them in his journey towards the east at Jagannath Puri. The Guru does not believe in incarnations. He does not accept God as Vishnu or Krishna. He has totally rejected dualism; therefore, he does not accept the thought of Mādhva and Nimbārka. In a way, the Guru has rejected all the Vaishnava schools, because of their concept of God. But from the point of view

of devotion, there is some similarity. Most of the points of similarity exist between the thought of Guru Nanak on the one hand and Advaita and Vishishtādvaita on the other. Since Vedānta is based primarily on Upanishads and the Vaishnava schools also rely on these scriptures for their interpretations, their similarities with the thought of Guru Nanak become apparent, because Guru Nanak expounds *Brahm Vidyā* like the Rishis (seers) who wrote Upanishads. The differences have cropped up because of hair-splitting by the *Acharyas*. The *Acharyas* lay emphasis on the *Saguna* aspect of Brahman, but the Guru lays emphasis on the *Nirguna* aspect.

Chapter XI

GURU NANAK AND BHAKTI CULTS

Guru Nanak has laid emphasis on total surrender and devotion towards the Lord. The disciple who feels the pangs of separation like a devoted wife ultimately enjoys communion with the Lord. An equilibrium of devotion, action and knowledge is necessary. The bride knows her lord and acts in a manner that pleases him. This action is the whole-hearted devotion. According to Guru Nanak, devotion is an inner disposition which attains maturity with love and faith; therefore, all formalism and rituals will not help much. We must turn inwards for the reality which resides within us. There is no need of *Karma Kānda* and *Upasanā Kānda* i.e. rituals and modes of worship.

There are five Hindu Bhakti cults viz. Vaishnava cult, Shaiva cult, Shākta cult, Ganapatya cult and Saura cult. Each cult has its own mode of worship, through which the disciple has to rise from the level of sensibility to the level of divinity. This is done through *Tantras*. Through these books, the devotee is initiated into the technique of worship. The above-mentioned cults are therefore known as Tantrik cults. The word *Āgama* has also been used for Tantra.

Vaishnavism

The Vaishnava cult identifies the highest reality with Vishnu, who carries the four appurtenances in his four hands viz. conch (*shankha*), discus (*chakra*), club (*gadā*) and lotus (*padma*). There are several incarnated forms of Vishnu, but ten are prominent among them viz. *Matsya* (Fish), *Kūrma* (Tortoise), *Varāhā* (Boar), *Narsimha* (Man-lion), *Vāman* (Dwarf), *Parshurama*, *Rāma*, *Balarāma*, *Krishna* and *Kalkī*.

Vaishnavism is also called Bhagavata, Pancharatra, Sattvata and Ekāntika. It is the sum-total of various concepts i.e. the concept of Vishnu, the concept of Narayana, the concept of Vasudeva and the concept of Krishna. According to Vaishnava Tantras, Vishnu takes various forms. He is both transcendent and immanent. He incarnates and sometimes appears as grouped. The idol is also one of his forms. Vasudeva, Ramkrishna, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are the four group forms of Vishnu.

The Panchratra Sanhitas are texts of ritual worship. The idols are installed in Vaishnava shrines and are regarded as permanent incarnations. They are also considered as reservoirs of the redemptive mercy of Vishnu. The final objective of a Vaishnava is to attain the presence of the Lord; but, for this purpose, His Grace is necessary. The seeker adopts the triple yoga of action, knowledge and devotion. He surrenders completely to the Lord. This absolute self-surrender is known as *prapatti*. It is the highest stage of love for the Lord. Some external means

like *Mantras* (mystic sound formulae) and *Yantras* (diagrams) are also adopted in order to attain the end.

But all the external practices and rituals were rejected by the Guru. Besides *Mantras* and *Yantras*, he has also rejected *Tantras*. He is strongly against idol-worship and the idea of incarnation.

Shaivism

Like Vaishnava philosophy, there are various schools of Shaiva philosophy. The more important of the Shaiva Schools are Shaiva Siddhanta, Vira-Shaivism and Kashmir Shaivism.

According to Shaiva Siddhanta (Southern Shaivism) Shiva is the supreme reality. Though Jīva is of the same essence as Shiva, but it is not identical with Him. Māyā is the material cause of the universe and eternal in its unmanifest form. Thirty-six principles take their birth from it. These principles and the three categories (God, soul and bonds) are all real. The impurity in the soul occurs because of *pāsha* or bonds and the release consists in four stages i.e. *Charyā*, *Kriyā*, *Yoga* and *Gyan*. *Charya* stands for external acts of worship, *Kriya* for acts of intimate service to God, *Yoga* for internal worship or contemplation and *Gyan* for direct means to perfection.

Vira Shaivism literally means heroic Shaivism. It is also called Lingayata, because the followers wear a *linga* around their neck. Its philosophy is called

Shakti Vishishtādvaita (non-duality of God qualified by His *Shakti* or power). According to this philosophy *Parā Shiva* is the ultimate cause of the world. The creation takes place through *Shakti*. This *Shakti* or *Māyā* resides in the supreme Brahman. *Jiva* is a part of *Shiva*. Their relation is that of *bhedābheda* (difference-cum-non-difference). The final release of the *Jiva* is realization of this relation through *Bhakti*. The seeker has to surrender himself to *Guru* (preceptor), *Jangama* (perfected soul) and *Linga* (*Shiva*) in order to obtain divine grace. His worship consists of the worship of the *Linga* and observance of some practices including the smearing of the body with ashes and wearing of the rosary.

Kashmir Shaivism is a type of monism. It believes that ultimate reality is *Shiva*, who manifests Himself as universe through his five-fold *Shakti* i.e. *Chit Shakti*, the power of intelligence, *Ananda Shakti*, the power of bliss, *Ichha Shakti*, the power of desire, *Gyan Shakti*, the power of knowledge and *Kriya Shakti*, the power of action. The soul is identical with *Shiva*, but when it comes into contact with *Sansāra*, it forgets its essential nature. The final liberation consists in its return to the original perfection and purity.

As we have seen above, all the schools of Shaivism regard *Shiva* as the supreme reality. Detailed description of rituals, worship and contemplation is found in *Shaiva-Agamas*. The emphasis is laid on ceremonial initiation. The union with *Shiva* is attained

through knowledge, devotion, contemplation and worship of Shiva. There is also a Shiva vow

Shaktism

Shākta philosophy is also a type of non-dualism like Shaivism. According to it the reality is *Sat* (being), *Chit* (conscious) and *Ānanda* (bliss). It manifests itself as plurality through *māyā*. This thought resembles the Advaita of Shankara, but there is a difference in the approach regarding *māyā*. For Shankara *māyā* is an illusion, but in Shāktism *māyā* is a real power. Shāktas believe that Shaktī or *māyā* is the moving principle of Shiva, who is the basic foundation of creation. There are two aspects of Shaktī i.e. *chit shaktī* and *māyā shaktī*, the former is luminous and the latter veiled.

For Shāktism, like Kashmir Shaivism, the Reality is Shiva-Shakti. But whereas Shaivism lays emphasis on Shiva, Shāktism regards Shaktī as the dominant factor. It proclaims the motherhood of God; therefore, it teaches reverence for the female members of the society.

Like Advaita Vedanta, the final liberation in Shāktism is the realization of the non-duality of the Supreme Spirit. But for Shākta the plurality of *māyā* is real and not illusory; therefore, he believes in ceaseless activity and meditation in order to obtain final liberation. He sees the Mother everywhere and in all things; therefore, even the left-handed (*vāma*) practices are adopted. The *Vāmāchara* discipline involves the use of wine and woman. It is known as

Pancha-makāra-puja. The five makāras are *madya* (wine), *mānsa* (meat), *matsya* (fish), *mudrā* (grain) and *maithuna* (sexual intercourse). This ritual is performed in three ways *i.e.* in its gross form, in its subtle form and through substitution.

The final objective of the Shaiva discipline is to cast off the animal disposition and become divine. The final stage is known as *Kaula* and in this stage the *Sadhak* pursues the path of renunciation and realizes Brahman. The guidance of a Guru is considered essential. In the beginning, the *Sadhak* has to start with outer worship, but has to go gradually inwards. The Images, *Yantras* and *Mantras* form part of the highly complicated ritual worship.

The practices of the Shāktas were strongly rejected by the stalwarts of Bhakti movement, including Guru Nanak. The ritual in its gross form was widely condemned. The word 'Shāakta' or 'Sākat' was often used by the above-mentioned saints and meant "a follower of Shakti or mammon".

Ganapatya Cult

According to this cult, Ganpati or Ganesha is regarded as the highest deity. It combines Shakti with Ganapati. There are several varieties of the Ganapatya sect, each sect having its own peculiarities. One of these sects Uchchishta-Ganapati has adopted the vāmāchari practices. While discussing the practices of Hindu cults, Guru Nanak has made a mention of Ganesha Chakra.

Saura Cult

The object of worship in this cult is Sun, who is regarded as Brahman, the source of all things. The well-known *Gayatri-Mantra* is addressed to him. According to Guru Nanak, the sun and moon move along their orbits for millions of miles under the fear of the Lord. All the ablutions performed in the presence of the sun are useless. No god or ritual has any significance for the Guru.

The last two cults could not spread far and wide, but the first three cults have their followers throughout the length and breadth of the country. Guru Nanak visited all the prominent shrines of these cults and held discussions with the religious leaders of these cults. The Guru was against henotheism *i.e.* the raising of one god to the supreme status. For him Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma were the powers of the Lord and one power could not be called the supreme Lord. Shakti was subservient to the will of the Lord. It was the creation of the Lord; therefore, it could not be recognised as the supreme authority. The Guru talked of countless Vishnus, Shivas and Brahmas.

All the rituals based on various cults were rejected by the Guru. He laid emphasis on *Gyan-Kānda* and wanted the seeker to rise higher and higher on the spiritual plane through the adoption of ethical qualities. These qualities were essential for devotion. He wanted an equilibrium of action, knowledge and devotion. This was the real yoga and its adoption

was the beginning of the grace of the Lord. Therefore he rejected the *Kundalinī yoga* taught by the Tantras. Kundalini is the psychic power, which is to be aroused and made to ascend in order to gain union with Shiva. The physical location of the Kundalini is the lower end of the vertebral column. There are six centres (chakras) of consciousness through which the Kundalini has to pierce, and they are located in the column in an ascending order. These six centres are *Mūlādhāra*, *Svadhishthān*, *Manīpuraka*, *Anāhata*, *Vishuddha* and *Ajnā*. There is a seventh centre called *Sahasrāra* which lies beyond the above centres. This centre is the abode of Shiva and is located in the brain.

There are yoga *nadis* (nerves) which meet at the centres. Of these, three are prominent viz. *Idā*, *Pinglā* and *Sushumnā*. These *nadis* are the channels of the psychic force. Through the help of these *nadis* and mantras the different centres in the ascending order are gained.

Guru Nanak rejected such a yoga outright. His yoga is *Sahaja yoga* or *Nām yoga*. In Kundalini Yoga the *Anāhat Shabda* (unstruck melody) is heard during ascent through *prānāyāmā*, but, according to the Guru, it is gained through the word of the Guru.¹ The complicated Yogic practices are quite useless. The impurity of the mind can never be washed off through these practices. Only the True Guru and his

1. Anhad sabad suhāvane pāiai gur vicāri

(Sri Rāga M. I, p. 21)

word can save us.¹ All those who think of other things than the Lord, are drowned in the ocean of Sansāra.² Only the remembrance of the Name of the Lord is the real worship.³ The Name is the real nectar.

-
1. Nivli karam bhuangam bhāṭhi reṇak pūrak kumbh karai
Bin Satigur kichu sojhi nāhi bharme bhūlā būdi marai
(Prabhāti M. I, p. 1343)
 2. Khasam chodi dūje lage dubbe se wanjāriā
(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 470)
 3. Gahir gambhir sāgar ratnāgar avar nahi an pūjā
Sabadu bicāri bharam bhau bhanjanu avar nā jāniā dūjā
(Sārang M. I, p. 1233)

Chapter XII

GURU NANAK, ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS AND MODERN THOUGHT

Among the ancient peoples, none could develop a genuine philosophy except the Greeks. This philosophy has a religious origin. There have been several schools of Greek philosophy. The first school is known as the school of Milesian natural philosophers, which took its birth roundabout Miletus, the capital of Greek Asia-Minor during the sixth century before Christ. Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes were its chief exponents. These philosophers depended on experience gained through senses and discarded the old mythology. The prominent thought of Thales was that Water is the material cause of all things. Anaximenes and Anaximander have also propounded the theory of primary substance. For Anaximenes the primary substance is Air but for Anaximander it was neither water, nor air, nor fire but the Infinite, which gives rise to everything and in which everything is ultimately absorbed. Another philosopher Herakleitos believed that Fire was the primary substance and man's soul was part of the universal fire.

There was a religious revival with Pythagoras. He was the author of a movement which tried to bring

reform in Orphism or worship of Olympic gods. He taught the doctrine of transmigration and showed great interest in the promotion of mathematical studies, including numbers, proportion and harmony. Xenophanes, another philosopher ridiculed the religious ideas of Pythagoras. He was the first philosopher of the Eleatic school and believed in One God only. The other important philosophers of Eleatic school were Parmenides and Zeno. The former is the exponent of the Doctrine of Being. He is a monist and Zeno, his disciple, has defended his monism. Zeno has expounded his doctrine of *absolutely motionless being*. There is another pair of philosophers, namely, Empedokles and Anaxagoras who side with Eleatics and reconcile with their doctrine. Empedokles believes that matter is immutable, but bodies formed from this matter of four roots (air, fire, water and earth) are in a state of constant change. This was his doctrine of pluralism. Anaxagoras has expounded the doctrine of 'seeds'. He believed in the plurality of independent elements which he called 'seeds'. According to him, the motion in the mixture of elements was produced by *Mind* or *Nous*.

Then there arose Sophists in the middle of the fifth century B.C. Protagoras was the earliest Sophist. His doctrine was "Man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are and of things that are not that they are not". He considered all laws and morals as only relatively valid. Another Sophist, Demokritos by name, propounded his theory of

atomism and also his theory of knowledge. He declared Being and not-Being as the basic constituents of all things. They are divided into innumerable particles. The soul is also composed of atoms. For him thought is a physical process. The universe is purposeless and mechanical laws govern the atoms. His ethics consists of cheerfulness as the goal of life.

The above description of the pre-Socrates philosophers shows that a greater part of the thought expressed is similar to Indian thought. It appears that Indian philosophy had a strong impact on the Greek thought. We find in the above-mentioned theories of Greek philosophers several doctrines expressed by Sankhya, Vaisheshika, Nyaya and Vedanta. Guru Nanak has expressed some of the thoughts in his verses which have a similarity with the thoughts expressed by some of the pre-Socrates philosophers, but their background is Indian and not Greek.

There is every possibility that, when during his journey in the Middle East the Guru visited Constantinople in Turkey, he might have visited Greece in person or might have come into contact with the Greek scholars of his times.

The most prominent Greek philosophers were Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Though Socrates did not write anything, the gleams of his personality have been revealed to us by Plato and Xenophane. Two main doctrines arise from the conversations of Socrates

i.e. the doctrine of logic and the doctrine of virtue. By his logical method, he concluded that there may be many virtues but in reality there is one, and that in Justice. Temperance, wisdom, courage and friendliness are all included in it.

Plato was a disciple of Socrates and one of the greatest philosophers. His philosophy has been divided into dialectic (theory of knowledge), metaphysics and ethics. He believes like Socrates that conceptual knowledge is the only genuine knowledge. The knowledge of reality is gained through Truth, but, in the changing world, whatever we perceive through our senses, is not true. Therefore the sense objects cannot be beautiful or good either. According to Plato, there are four levels of knowledge *viz.* conjectural knowledge, sense-derived knowledge, mathematical knowledge and dialectical knowledge.

One of the most important doctrines of Plato is the doctrine of ideas. According to him, the idea is supreme. It presents qualities common to many particulars. The particulars are transient, but the idea is imperishable. Thus the idea or ideal is real.

The metaphysics of Plato includes physics and psychology. The Sciences which he has discussed are arithmetic, plane and solid geometry, astronomy, harmonics and dialectic. He has talked of Nature, cosmology, psychology, doctrine of immortality, ethics, politics and education.

Several ideas of Plato are common with Guru Nanak. Shri Dharam Anant Singh wrote a book

entitled "Plato and the True Enlightener of Soul" in 1912 in which he made a compendium of the comparative doctrines of Plato and Guru Nanak.

The following prominent points are among the common beliefs of Plato and Guru Nanak :

1. The Governments perish by committing excesses.
2. Music builds character and preserves health.
3. A community is strong if it believes in God.
- 4 Religion and faith lead to salvation.
- 5 We want to be ruled by the best—the philosopher king, a king of thought and action.

Whereas ideas of Socrates were developed by Plato, the ideas of Plato were developed by Aristotle, the foremost disciple of Plato and one of the greatest philosophers. He had wide and varied interests. He wrote on Logic (*Organon*), Metaphysics, Ethics, Economics, Politics, Rhetoric, Poetics, Physics etc. We are concerned here only with his metaphysics and ethics. He has presented cosmological arguments regarding God's existence. His concept of God is "a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration, continuous and eternal, belong to God, for this is God". His ethics depicts the qualities of a high-minded man for whom the highest good is self-realization. But this high-minded man falls short in qualities in comparison with the ideal man of Guru Nanak. He lacks humility which is the foremost

quality in Guru Nanak's ideal person. Benevolence and love are not recognised as important virtues.

Both Plato and Aristotle are idealists like Guru Nanak. There are some points of similarity, but this similarity seems to be because of Indian influence on Greek thinkers.

The age of reconstruction in Greek philosophy ended with Plato and Aristotle. This age was followed by the Ethical Movement represented by Epicureans, Stoics and Sceptics. The Hedonistic ethics propounded by Epicurus is known as Epicureanism.

According to Epicurus, the universe is made up of infinite number of atoms, which move in infinite space. The soul is also atomic. In this atomic world pleasure is the goal of all living beings, but there are several kinds of pleasures and they differ in intensity. There are mental pleasures as well as physical pleasures. Pleasures are followed by pains and pains by pleasures. In order to be free from pain and fear, one should be prudent and virtuous. Epicurean happiness does not consist in debauchery and sensual indulgence. Epicureanism is not a doctrine of sensuality. The followers of Epicurus were instrumental in debasing his pleasure theory in order to satisfy their own sensual desires. Epicurus prefers intellectual pleasures, prudence and repose of mind to violent pleasures. Guru Nanak has talked of pleasures and pains. According to him pain is followed by pleasure and pleasure by pain, but real

happiness consists in concentration on the Name of the Lord, which is the panacea for all ills.

The hedonism of Epicurus was opposed by the Stoics, who were closer to the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. A Stoic aims at the rational basis of ethics. All knowledge is gained through sense-perception. Matter and force are inter-linked. All objects including soul and even God are corporeal. A man is free, when he acts according to his logical thought. He should be ruled by reason. He should submit to the law of the universe and live according to nature. For a Stoic, virtue is the highest happiness. Unlike an Epicurean, he is a citizen of the world and participates in social and political life. He is not egoistic. There are several points in the ethics of the Stoics, which brings it closer to Guru Nanak's ethics; but whereas Guru Nanak is mystic and spiritualist, the Stoic is a physicist and rationalist.

The Sceptics held that we cannot know the nature of things. The knowledge gained through senses is not complete knowledge. We can assent only to a judgment and not an idea. We cannot prove anything. Thus there cannot be any certainty of knowledge in moral matters. However, there are various degrees of probability. There are many contradictions in the idea of God; therefore it is impossible to know Him. Guru Nanak does not concern himself with the metaphysical and ethical concepts of the Stoics.

Thus we see that Guru Nanak propounded a

philosophy of his own, his mysticism is unknown to Greek philosophers, his metaphysics and ethics, though similar in part to Greek counterparts, is wholly indigenous in character.

Guru Nanak and Modern Materialistic View on Reality

A question has been posed whether the natural or the supernatural forces govern the development of the world. Whereas Guru Nanak points towards the supernatural forces, the modern materialists talk about the natural forces. Guru Nanak believes that the spirit and consciousness precede matter, while matter is regarded as primary by the materialists. This is the basic difference in the philosophies represented by Guru Nanak and Marx : the one moves in the world of spirit and the other in the world of matter. But it may not be misconstrued that Guru Nanak is only a spiritualist. He talks of spirit and matter both. For Guru Nanak, the world of matter is not illusory, it is as much a reality as the world of spirit.

For the materialist the world of matter is the only reality; therefore, he talks only of the world of senses, the society and the material well-being of society. He propounds social and economic ideas. Engels has ridiculed the misconception of the bourgeois who consider materialism as gluttony, drinking, carnality, self-interest, cupidity etc. This shows that materialism has its own virtues. But the materialist thinks that spiritualism or idealism represents the interests of the old reactionary classes. He considers

himself progressive. This may be true, if we accept the views of a materialist on idealism. But the idealism of Guru Nanak is bi-sided. He wants human development on both the planes *i.e.* material and the spiritual, or dialectical and metaphysical.

The materialist considers the metaphysical as immutable and the dialectical as developing and changing. Metaphysicists are said to be blind to the inner source of development, but look towards an outside agency *i.e.* God. But with Guru Nanak, God is not an outside agency. He is immanent as well as transcendent. Though He is changeless, He gives life and energy to the whole phenomenon, which develops and changes because of the life-force released by God. Thus dialectical is dependent upon metaphysical.

The materialist bases his views on reality, which is external. The scientific theory of external reality is called dialectical materialism. It was propounded by Karl Marx. The Marxist philosophy says that the world is single. The materiality is the common property of the infinite things and phenomena around us. We may call it the material unity of the world. According to materialists, it is not possible to prove the unity of the world on the basis of our thoughts. The world is one, because it is material and in the material world there is inseparable connection between matter and motion.

Motion may be said to be a form of the existence of matter. Einstein's theory of relativity and his

famous law of proportionality of mass and energy has been interpreted as the proof of the fact that matter is transformed into energy. Time and Space are also considered forms of the existence of matter. Therefore there is the integral unity of time, space and matter. Consciousness is the property of highly organised matter. It is also a social product and originates within society.

Most of the above views of materialists are not acceptable to Guru Nanak. His penetrating eye sees matter and motion everywhere, but the question arises as to who is responsible for motion? Who transforms matter into energy? Matter itself is a dead mass. The Guru says, "An oil-press, a spinning-wheel, the grinding-stone, the potter's wheel, infinite number of whirlwinds, the tops, the churning staff, the arenas of threshing grain, the breathless flying bird and all the living beings likewise move on an axle. There is no end to this motion and the beings in motion. He (God) has put them in motion. Everything dances to the tune of the fruit of its actions. They dance and laugh; they move and weep; but they do not obtain release or gain supernatural powers":† In another hymn, the Guru says, "The sun and the moon move in His Fear. They move millions of miles and there is no end to their movement".††

Thus the Guru cannot think of any motion independent of the Primal Power, the Real Energy

† Vār Āsā M. I, Paurī 5, Shloka 2.

†† Vār Āsā M. I, Paurī 4, Shloka 1.

behind everything. The matter cannot have consciousness without the soul which is part and parcel of God. Materialists have advanced a proof regarding the non-existence of soul. They say that a dead body was restored to life. It regained consciousness. If there had been a soul, it could not have been done. But this is not a convincing proof. Consciousness is the quality of the soul. The organs of the body function only when the soul is present. In the above case, the soul remained within the body, which had become very weak. It appeared that the patient was dead, but actually he had not died. *Prāna* or the vital breath is the important link between the soul and the body. When the breath became apparent, there was consciousness. The Guru says, "Under the will of the Lord, the soul flies away and the ashes mix with ashes".*

Guru Nanak and Karl Marx

Five centuries have passed since the birth of Guru Nanak. Civilization has taken many strides. The sphere of scientific knowledge has been widened by the inventions of famous scientists. Philosophers and psychologists have developed certain theories. Persons like Marx and Engels have brought an ideological revolution in the world. During the past five centuries, there has been great development materially, but when we look at the

* Udari hansu caliā phurmāiā bhasmai bhasam samāṇi
(Tukhāri M. I, p. 1111)

spiritual and moral sides, humanity has decayed and declined.

Although the time in which Guru Nanak walked physically in this world, cared more for the individual than the masses, the great Guru upheld that it was the people who mattered in the set-up of a society. Sinful exploiters gain their ground for some time, when greed the king, vice the minister, falsehood the captain and lust the lieutenant hold council with one another :

Lobh pāp doe rājā mehtā kūr hoā sikhār

Kām neb sad puchiye beh beh karai vichar

(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 468)

The strength of these exploiters lasts as long as ignorance makes the people blind to their welfare :

Andhi raiyat gian vihūṇi

(Vār Āsā M. I, p. 469)

Karl Marx was born in 1818, *i.e.* about three and a half centuries after Guru Nanak and formulated some theories about the socialist and communist society. He was fascinated by the French Revolution in which he saw the destruction of the feudal regime. He peeped into the revolutionary spirit of the factory labourer against the capitalist and the proletariat against the exploiting bourgeois. His conclusions have been generally accepted by a major part of the people.

Guru Nanak travelled through many countries giving his message to the down-trodden and the

exploited people; but, though five centuries have passed, there has been no attempt by his followers to spread his message abroad. In the times of Guru Nanak there was no other method of publicity except personal contacts. For that reason, he had to travel far and wide. His message was received with great enthusiasm. The great Guru condemned the evil forces; he saw the king exploiting his subjects, the Brahman exploiting the Shudra. The Indian king of the time and his officers had lost all sense of truth and justice and thought only of their own comfort. The people were sick of their king and that brought about the revolution. Babar invaded India. The great Guru expressed his feeling in the following way :

Sahan surt gavāīā rang tamāshe chāi,

Babar vani phir gai koīr na roti khāi (Āsā M. I, p. 417)

“The kings lost all their sense because of sensuous pursuits; the arrival of Babar was proclaimed and the prince could not get morsel of food”.

The head of the state, who follows the democratic principles, sits on the throne without any fear :

Raja Takhat tikai guni bhai panchāin rat

(Mārū M I, p. 992)

Under the influence of the French and the Industrial Revolutions, Marx evolved dialectical materialism. He believed that the dominant motives of man are materialistic. This shows that Marx

could only think of the body and not of the spirit. He could only ponder over the material well-being of humanity. Guru Nanak, however, thought of both. He instructed his followers to work, earn, spend and give out of their earnings to the needy. This leads a person to the ideal path of life :

Ghāl khāi kich hathon dei

Nanak rāh pachanai sei

(Vār Sārang Shloka M. I, p 1245)

Marx has only the material target and no spiritual target for humanity. But Guru Nanak preached a balanced life, wherein matter and spirit have been given due place.

Marx had the communist society in view, in which private property would be abolished. It will be a classless society, in which all human beings will be considered as equals. Guru Nanak also talked of a similar Satyuga obtained through love and love alone on the principle of brotherhood of man and Fatherhood of God.

Thus we see certain similarities in the progressive outlook of Guru Nanak and Marx. But whereas Marx talks of matter only, Guru Nanak talks about matter and spirit both. Guru Nanak had the betterment of masses in mind both materially and spiritually. He talked to the people in their own language about it.

Existentialism

Besides Marxism, there is another modern atheist movement known as Existentialism. It maintains

that in the case of man existence precedes essence. The existence is the primary factor. After his existence or birth in this world he chooses his essence. He is absolutely free in the choice of his ends. The main doctrine of Existentialism is that man makes himself and there is always another chance until death. It believes that God does not exist and there is no human nature. Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. It is not possible for him to transcend human subjectivity. He has a great responsibility, because he has to make himself. That is why there is anguish and we may say that man is anguish. He does not believe in the power of passion. For him the reality lies in action; therefore, he is nothing else than the sum-total of his acts. Thus he is opposed to quietism.

The thoughts of Sartre, the main exponent of modern Existentialism, are mostly contrary to the thoughts expressed by Guru Nanak. For Guru Nanak, the existence of God is the basic reality. God is the Creator of the universe. The soul (or individuality) is a part and parcel of the Higher Soul (God) and also it is immortal like God; therefore the essence precedes existence. Man cannot make himself. Undoubtedly, there is some amount of free-will which a man can exercise; and, for that purpose, a great responsibility lies on his shoulders. He has to follow moral laws in order to rise higher on the spiritual plane, where all anguish vanishes and all worldly passions die down. Guru Nanak and Sartre are both activists and opposed to quietism, but the

nature of activity is remarkably different. An Existentialist is an egoist, but the follower of Guru Nanak is humble and modest.

Humanism

Humanism may signify any movement which gives primary importance to human welfare. It may be an ethical, religious, philosophical, literary or sociological movement. The basis of humanism in each different sphere is the thought of the relative movement. There is no doubt that Guru Nanak and Marx had the same objective in view, but their basic doctrines have given a different shape to their humanism. While Guru Nanak has the welfare of the whole of humanity in his view on the physical, ethical and spiritual planes, the Marxist aims at welfare on physical and ethical planes of all communist brotherhoods. No doubt, it has the good of all the peoples at heart, but followers of a different ideological system fall outside their purview. The humanism of a Marxist embodies the aspirations of a people and is enriched by the experience of their struggle. It is realistic humanism. The humanism of Guru Nanak regards all human beings of the world as a part of the great universal fraternity. It brings all the humanity in its purview. Like Marxism, it is concerned with the material well-being of the people. All the members of the society should be provided with food, shelter and clothing, and it is the primary duty of a ruler. But the material well-being is only a midway target. The humanism of Guru Nanak further gives a great ethical discipline

and provides for development on the spiritual plane. The domain of spirit is totally ignored by the Marxist humanism.

The exploitation of man by man or of one class by another class is regarded a great sin by Guru Nanak. This view is equally shared by Marxists. The inequality in social status has been deprecated by the Guru and Marx both. All the human beings are equal. None is born great. If a section of society becomes poor, it is the duty of the ruler and other members of the society to see that none remains naked and hungry. The Guru says that an individual should set apart a portion of his earnings for the well-being of the needy. He urged for a free kitchen (*langar*) which is one of the greatest virtues of Sikh brotherhood.

The humanism of Marx may be called materialistic humanism, but the humanism of Guru Nanak is theocentric. He talks of one great source (*i.e.* God), from which we emerge and to which we have to go. Marx remains outward only, but the Guru looks both outwardly and inwardly for the satisfaction of both physical and spiritual needs.

Appendix I—(A)

A CRITICAL STUDY OF JAPJI

Japji is considered as the epitome of the *Ādi Granth* and the crux of Sikh Thought. It is said to have been composed by Guru Nanak in the later years of his life, when he settled down at Kartarpur after his long journeys. People from far and near used to gather around him and listen to his discourses. He composed this longer poem for their recitation, guidance and spiritual advancement. It was meant to be recited by the disciples in the early hours of the morning. Though Guru Nanak did not consider mere recitation as a sufficient dose for spiritual progress, he wanted his disciples to comprehend the basic tenets through regular study and practice.

Besides the *Mūl Mantra* (the original sacred formula), the prologue and the epilogue, there are thirty-eight stanzas of varying metres and length in this poem. The *Mūl Mantra* gives us an insight into the nature of the ultimate reality. The sacred formula is followed by a *Shloka*, which forms the prologue of the poem. The subject is introduced to us in this *Shloka*. This subject is *Truth*. In the next thirty-eight stanzas, the Guru has dealt with this subject at length, laying emphasis on those means by which the wall of falsehood can be completely demolished. The last *Shloka* or the epilogue presents his conclusive remarks.

Like Gita and the Upanishads, *Japji* is a poem of perennial importance, because it deals with perennial philosophy. It talks of time and space in relation to the Timeless and the non-spatial

entity. We live in the world of names and forms, but our ideal is the attainment of the Formless and Attributeless Lord. For the realisation of this ideal, several hints have been given in *Jappi*. Since this poem is a compendium of Sikh Thought, we shall try to touch upon all the main points contained in it.

The main subject : As has been said above, the main subject of this poem is *Truth*. A question has been posed in the very beginning : "How can we become true and how can the wall of falsehood be demolished ?" The poet himself has given the answer to this question in the next verse : "To work under the Divine Will, Nanak hath written it with (the above question)". This clearly shows that Guru Nanak believed that *Truth* can only be realised in concurrence with the Divine Will. But the question arises as to the nature of this *Truth*. The answer to this question is found in the Prologue of the poem :

Truth was in the beginning,

Truth was in the beginning of the ages,

Truth is prevalent in the present,

Truth will be prevalent in future also. (Shloka 1)

Only Brahman or God pervades all the three divisions of Time *i.e.* past, present and future; therefore only God is the *Truth* referred to in the Prologue. Thus the attainment of Truth is the realisation of the Ultimate Reality.

In the *Mūl Mantra*, the poet has given the name of God as *Truth*, the ever-existent One. Truth is indivisible and imperishable. The world of form, action and name perishes, but the Lord of this world abides for ever along with the finite selves. The soul or the finite self, which is a part and parcel of the Higher Soul enters the world of form, action and name and undergoes births and deaths. But this cycle ceases, whenever the Truth dawns upon the finite self. The entry into the plane of *Truth* can only be achieved through the Grace of the Lord, which puts us

on the right track and brings an equilibrium of action, devotion and knowledge.

Since God is *Truth*, therefore, *Truthfulness* in practical life is godliness. All the attributes of God, whenever practised, take us near God.

Time and Space : The eternal and non-spatial Lord has created this world of time and space, which may be called *Qudrat* (Nature) or *māyā*. Hinduism talks of several ages and periods in the process of creation. Science also gives its estimate of different ages in the evolution of the world. In different countries and different schools of thought different times of the origin and the periods of the evolution of the world have been imagined. Some scriptures have even given the number of years that have passed since the creation of the world by God. But Guru Nanak does not agree with all such thinking. He holds that only God Himself knows the time of the origin of the creation. This question in *Japji* is significant.

Which is that time, lunar date or the day,

Which is that season or month when the material world
came into being ?

The Guru himself has replied :

Only the Creator, who hath created the world, knows it.

(Stanza 21)

Thus none knows or can know the exact time of the birth of the universe. The natural corollary of this fact is that all the divisions of time are the result of mere human imagination. The apparent division of time *i.e.* Past, Present and Future is only for the human body and the soul suffers because of this limitation of the body attached to it. When it knows itself and the Lord, time-element vanishes. The body experiences birth, childhood, youth, old age and death, but the soul always remains the same.

The concept of time works in the created space. According to Guru Nanak the creation of the infinite Lord cannot be delimited. He talks of an immeasurable expanse in the sense of 'Neti, Neti' :

There is no limit of the created material world,
There is no limit and no end.
Several people wander for the knowledge of His limits,
None can know this limit,
The more we think of it, the more it goes farther.

(Stanza 24)

Some cosmological system extend the limits of the universe created by God to seven skies and seven nether-worlds, but Guru Nanak talks of lakhs of skies and lakhs of nether-worlds.

There are lakhs of nether-worlds and skies,
The ends were explored, the Vedas declare, but in vain.
The source is only One, the Hindu and Muslim scriptures say,
He is unaccountable. Whosoever takes account, perishes.
Only He *The Supreme* knows himself, saith Nanak.

(Stanza 22)

Thus time and space have value only in relation to *Jiva* i.e. the embodied soul and no significance in relation to God.

Jiva : Time and space are an imprisonment for the soul. The jiva acts under the Will of Brahman and enters the arena of his Sport which is called *Jagat* or *Samsāra* in Indian philosophy. The *Samsāra* is a *Karma-Bhoomi* (field of action) bound by the Laws of God. In this field of action the jiva undergoes a very hard test, because it is surrounded on all sides by such forces as keep him away from the Lord. Worldly pleasures attract him, but he gets no satisfaction out of them. At times

he is subjected to lust, anger, greed, worldly affection and ego. At times he is hungry and thirsty. At times he is jealous of others. He is subjected to several ills and finds his release very difficult. He approaches the Perfect Enlightener by the grace of God and addresses him thus :

O Guru ! Give me the knowledge of One

Who is the only sustainer of all the Jivas,

I may never forget Him,

(Stanza 6)

Karma and Grace : Because of our *karmas* (action), we are enchained to the world of duality and ego and thus face misery and grief in this world. We are known by our actions only, which are judged in the court of the Lord. The plane on which we live is the plane of action; therefore we have to be very cautious about our actions. By our actions we become lowly, by our actions we rise in esteem. We rise and fall because of our actions. There are certain actions which we are enjoined by Shastras to perform for our spiritual advancement, but Guru Nanak has strongly rejected such actions. He says :

The birth is due to our actions,

The final liberation is due to Grace.

(Stanza 4)

Great emphasis is thus laid on the *grace* of the Lord. *Karma* and *grace*, the two opposing factors, have been reconciled. Both are necessary for spiritual development. Through the grace of the Lord, we are put on the right track and the necessary effects and precautions are performed on this path through the *grace* of the Lord.

Hukm : Surrender to the Judgment or Will of the Lord is the beginning of the grace of the Lord. The Arabic equivalent to the judgment of the Lord is known as *Hukm*. It is also interpreted as the Laws of God (or Nature). These laws are universal. Among these laws are the physical law of causation, the moral law of causation (known as the *doctrine of Karma*)

and the spiritual law of love. The whole world moves and works under the Laws of God. The Guru has said :

The world of matter is created by His *Hukm*,
 The *Hukm* of the Lord is inexplicable;
 The *Jivas* are created by His *Hukm*,
 The esteem is gained by His *Hukm*;
 One rises higher or falls lower according to His *Hukm*,
 The comforts and sorrows are written and obtained by
 His *Hukm*,
 Some attain grace according to His *Hukm*,
 And some are led astray by His *Hukm*;
 Everything is within His *Hukm*, none is outside it;
 If one comprehends His *Hukm*, he loses his ego.

(Stanza 2)

Shravan, Mannan and Niddhyasan : But the understanding of *Hukm* or Truth is brought about by *Shravan* (hearing) *Mannan* (thinking constantly) and *Niddhyasan* (meditation). Four stanzas of *Japji* are devoted to *Shravan* and four to *Mannan*. No stanza is devoted to *Niddhyasan*. The first stage, *Shravan*, signifies the hearing of the scriptures in order to get an insight into the transitoriness of the body and the immortality of the soul. *Mannan* leads us further to staunch faith and constant thought about the soul. It will bring peace and control of the mind, which will be a suitable state for beginning *Niddhyasan* (meditation). After constant meditation the seeker achieves the end *i.e.* *Darshan* or realization. In the four stanzas of *Shravan*, the Guru tells us clearly that on hearing the Name of the Lord through sacred scriptures and divine personalities, the seeker attains the state of bliss and all his sins and sorrows are washed away. He gains the knowledge of the method of *Yoga* and the secrets of the body. He imbibes the qualities of

truth and contentment. He gets knowledge of higher spheres. The state of *Mannan* is indescribable. At this stage, the mind and intellect are refined. The seeker thinks of piety and concentrates only on the Name of the Lord. He cannot be led astray and moves on the right path. At one place in the poem the Guru has said :

Having heard, thought constantly and loved wholeheartedly,

We take full bath at the innermost holy sanctuary.

(Stanza 21)

The above verses pointedly refer to the state of *Niddhyāsan* which is a state of meditation through love and devotion and which leads us to the realization of the Lord.

Devotion and Virtues : But there can be no devotion without a practical virtuous life. The Guru says :

All virtues are Thine, I have none. (Stanza 21)

The Lord is a treasury of virtues; therefore, in order to be virtuous, we have to adopt the qualities of the Lord in our lives. Truth, fearlessness, friendliness, sweetness etc. are godly qualities and, therefore, they are the virtues required of a saintly life. These virtues are received by us by the *Grace* of the Lord :

He gives virtues to the virtue-less and bestows more virtues upon the virtuous.

There seems to be none who can give a virtue to Him.

(Stanza 7)

In the concluding stanza of *Japji* preceding the epilogue, Guru Nanak has made it clear that the Name of the Lord resides only in a virtuous heart. The Name abides where continence, patience, knowledge, fear, fortitude and love abide.

Name and Guru : By an analogy, the Guru has emphasised the significance of the Name. When the hands, feet and body are smeared with dust, they are cleansed with water. When the clothes are polluted with urine, they are washed with soap. In a similar manner sins are washed away by the Name of the Lord. The *Name* is the *Word* of the Guru, which leads us to the knowledge of One. The *Shravan* and *Mannan* of the Name are the forward steps in the spiritual domain. By the Grace of God, we meet the Guru and by the grace of the Guru we get the Name through which we meet the Lord. The functions of the Guru are two-fold :

There is Word with the Guru,

There is Knowledge with the Guru.

(Stanza 5)

The Guru, thus, gives both the Word and the Knowledge. Those who remember the Word of the Guru or the Name not only obtain final emancipation for themselves, but others also, who adopt their line :

Those who have remembered the Name
have laboured well

They are revered in the Court of the Lord
and get release of others.

(Shloka 2)

Panchas or Liberated Ones : Such persons are known as *Panchas* or the liberated ones. These perfect beings not only get high positions in the Court of the Lord, but also receive the best regards in this world. They are the disciples of the True Guru and are invaluable traders of the invaluable Name. By dint of their efforts, grim determination and the Grace of the Lord, they enter the "tenth door" into the presence of the Lord. "*That door*" has been depicted in one of the stanzas of *Japji*. All the gods, goddesses and other forces, while awaiting there the orders of the Almighty, sing His praises. There are countless singers and countless musical instruments being played.

Shastric Injunctions and Formalism : The religion of *Panchas* is love and devotion. They have no faith in Shastric injunctions or religious practices. For them all *Karma Kānda* is of no avail for spiritual development. The pilgrimage to holy places is useful only if the Lord approves it. All formalism is absurd. A true *Yogi* wears the ear-rings of contentment and bears the staff of faith. The inner qualities are essential and not the outer garb. The love of the Lord should be for love's sake and not for any material gain. A *Yogi* who attains miraculous powers through concentration and meditation should neglect these powers because they will drag him down from spiritual heights.

Higher Planes : The plane, where we are born, is the plane of Piety (*Dharma Khand*). It is a plane of actions. In this world of time and space, of days and nights, of lunar dates and seasons, of air, water and fire, there are *Jivas* of diverse types, colours and names. These *Jivas* reap the fruit of their actions. Only *Panchas* are received with respect in the Court of the Lord because of their actions. Thus the plane of piety is the initial state of actions requiring us to adopt the real virtues in life by discriminating between good and bad actions.

Having imbibed virtues in our practical life and having acted or moved on the right path, we enter the next plane *i.e.* the plane of Knowledge (*Gyān Khand*). In this plane, the seeker observes the vastness of the Universe. He comes to know of various winds, waters, fires, Vishnus, Shivas, Brahmas, *Karma Bhumis* (fields of action), pole stars, Indras, moons, suns, spheres, countries, Siddhas, Buddhas, Nathas, goddesses, gods, demons, sages, gems, seas, *Khanis* (divisions of creation), *vanis* (modes of speech), kings, scriptures and their believers. There is no end to all these created forces. This plane gives an idea to the seeker of his position in this huge set-up. It gives him an impetus to recognise his own potentialities and try to rise on higher planes. He feels elated.

After leaving the plane of knowledge, the seeker enters the plane of effort (*Saram Khand*) wherein he washes away all the dirt of passions, vices and ego. He is purified and beautified. The intellect and mind become pure and beautiful. The seeker becomes a *Siddha* and god-like.

But the real power and strength comes when the seeker enters the next plane *i.e.* the plane of Grace (*Karam Khand*). The Lord is All-powerful. His powers manifest themselves in a seeker through His Grace. With full health and vigour a beautiful thing looks many times more beautiful. Thus the state of full bloom is attained in this plane. The saint-soldier reaches this plane and resides here in full ecstasy and glory.

The state achieved in the fourth plane leads the seeker to his goal *i.e.* the plane of Truth (*Sach Khand*). This plane is the abode of the Formless, who is Infinite and Creator and Master of the infinite creation. He controls the whole universe and directs it according to His Will. He is a conscious Power and sees and enjoys the sport of His creation conscientiously.

Triple Interpretation of the Five Planes : The above-mentioned five planes can be explained physically, morally and spiritually. The physical interpretation takes the whole of the creation under its purview. Our earth is the *plane of piety*. When we rise above the earth, we pass through different planets and spheres in the *plane of knowledge*. When we rise above to the *plane of effort*, the creation becomes subtle and beautiful. In the *plane of grace*, there are abodes of saints who are always absorbed in whole-hearted devotion to the Lord. The final *plane of truth* exhibits the infinite creation of the Infinite Lord. From the first to the fifth plane we are conscious of physical dimensions both finite and infinite, which shows that these planes exist physically.

The moral and the spiritual interpretations of the planes remind us of the journey and goal of the seeker. In order to rise

from the *plane of piety* to the *plane of truth* the seeker has to seek knowledge and make efforts to obtain the Grace of the Lord. Truth can only be achieved by becoming pious, seeking knowledge of the path from the Guru, by following that path by the *Graces* of Guru and God both. Truth can be realised by a balanced combination of *Karma* (efforts for piety), *Bhakti* (devotion by grace) and *Gyān* (knowledge).

Truth is God. In order to realize God, the spirit has to travel incessantly through the spiritual planes inwardly. Macrocosm is present in the microcosm. Whatever is inward is also outward and whatever is outward is also inward. The planes are the spiritual planes through which the spirit rises during its ascent. As the soul ascends, the body becomes subtle gradually and vanishes when it reaches the plane of Truth, where the Formless soul merges in Formless God.

Appendix I—(B)

A CRITICAL STUDY OF ASA KI VAR

After *Japji*, *Āsā ki Vār* is another prominent longer poem of Guru Nanak. Whereas *Japji* is recited by every Sikh in the early hours of the morning before joining the holy congregation (*Sādh Sangat*), *Āsā ki Vār* is sung daily in the congregation by the musicians to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Both these longer poems of Guru Nanak inspire and direct the disciple every day for a higher spiritual life. *Āsā ki Vār* is more analytical and explanatory.

In the pre-Nanak period, several heroic ballads were written by bards and minstrels, wherein exploits of heroes in battlefields were eulogised. These heroic ballads were called *Vārs*. This traditional form of folk-poetry was picked up by Guru Nanak in order to instil into the people the spirit of heroism on the moral and spiritual side. On the Indian scene, in the days of Guru Nanak, such a life was at its lowest ebb. Efforts had been made by stalwarts of the Bhakti Movement preceding Guru Nanak in their respective areas towards the moral and spiritual uplift of the masses. The Sikh Gurus took up the cudgels in the Punjab. Since the Punjab had been a gateway to India and several big battles had been fought on its soil, it was found necessary by the Great Guru to channelise the heroic spirit on the spiritual side.

Guru Nanak wrote three *Vārs* : *Mājh ki Vār*, *Āsā ki Vār* and *Malār ki Vār*, which have been included in the *Ādi Granth*.

The successors of Guru Nanak followed this practice of writing *Vārs*. Guru Amar Das, the third Guru, wrote four *Vārs*, Guru Ram Dass, the fourth Guru, composed eight, and Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru, wrote six. In all, there are twenty-two *Vārs* in the *Ādi Granth* including the one by *Satta* and *Balwand*, the bards in the court of Guru Arjan. All the *Vārs* are set to music and put under *Rāgas* and *Raginis* in the *Ādi Granth*, like other hymns. Guru Nanak wrote his three *Vārs* in *Mājh*, *Āsā* and *Malār Rāgas*.

Āsā ki Vār has twenty-four *paurīs* and each *Paurī* is preceded by two or more *Shlokas*. It has eighty-three stanzas in all, including *Paurīs* and *Shlokas*. While editing the *Vār*, Guru Angad, the second Sikh Guru, added a few *Shlokas* of his own. The number of these *Shlokas* is fifteen. The second *Shloka* preceding the 14th *Paurī* in the name of Guru Nanak also occurs as the first *Sahaskriti Shloka* in the name of the same Guru, with a little difference in some spellings. The second and the third *Shlokas* preceding the 12th *Paurī* in the name of the second Guru, occur as the third and fourth *Shlokas* in the name of Guru Nanak with a little difference. If we consider the two *Sahaskriti Shlokas* in the name of Guru Angad as those of Guru Nanak and wrongly assigned to the second Guru by the scribe, the number of the *Shlokas* of the second Guru are reduced to thirteen.

In the very beginning of the *Vār*, there is an instruction for musicians to sing the *Vār* in the same tune in which the popular *Vār* of Tunda Asraja was sung by the bards. The story of Tunda Asraja is a queer blending of the Indian story of Puran Bhagat and the Semitic story of Joseph. The high ideals of purity and modesty were presented through Tunda Asraja, who had to pass through hard days fighting against evil forces. The singing of the great *Āsa ki Vār* in the tune of the *Vār* of Tunda Asraja inspired and incited the listeners for a battle on the physical and moral planes in order to reach spiritual heights.

Whatever we see and hear is His Nature, which can be seen in skies, nether-worlds and in all matter; in Vedas, *Katebs* and in all Thoughts; in eating, drinking, wearing and loving, in virtues and vice, in air, water, fire and earth. He sees all His Nature and acts conscientiously.

He is fearless. The wind blows out of His fear. The rivers flow because of His fear. The fire burns in His fear. The Earth bears the burden under His fear. Indra, the god of gods, works under His fear. Yama, the god of death, sun, moon, Siddhas, Nathas, the mighty warriors etc. all work under His fear. He is Gracious and Merciful. The Jivas are powerless. His Grace saves them. He is immanent in His Nature, but He is incognizable. He is Great and Inexpressible. He takes care of every created thing and keeps it in His view. He is the cause of the actions of a Jiva. His creation is vast. He puts every Jiva to work. If He withdraws His Grace, He makes the kings fall very low and makes them beg from door to door without getting any alms.

Ethics : The actions of Jivas in this world are reviewed by the god of Justice. The virtuous are rewarded and the sinners are punished; therefore a code of conduct is essential for an individual. The primary virtue is *TRUTH*, which is a godly quality. Truthful living has been emphasised by the Guru. For truthful living the mind has to be made truthful by casting off the dirt of falsehood, by loving truth, by following the true art of living, by following the truthful instructions, by comprehending the art of living and by residing in the holy vicinity of the soul. For the Guru truthful living consists in cultivating the field of body and sowing in it the seed of the Name of the Lord. Mercy towards other *Jivas* and charity are other aids. Truth is the remedy for all ills; it washes away all sins.

For truthful living, modesty is another great virtue. We remain in ego throughout life; therefore we are subjected to

transmigration. When we know that we have to leave this world, why should we fall into the noose of ego? We should never talk ill of anybody. Our speech should always be sweet and never distasteful. Our speech and action should be identical. Those who are false in mind can never wash away the dirt of their actions even if they take bath in the sixty-eight holy places. But, in reality, those people are good people, who may be dirty from outside, but who are pure from inside. They are men of God. They do not care for anybody on the earth and are always intoxicated with the Name of the Lord. The big and high *simmal* tree is useless for the birds who come to it. Its flowers, fruit and leaves are of no use; therefore no good comes out of ego. Only humility and modesty brings sweetness. They are the essence of virtues. If one wants to rise higher, he should do good actions and be humble.

Guru Nanak is against all *Karma Kāndas* i.e. rituals. He is against all formalism. When he talks of *Yogyopaveet* (*janeoo*), he is against the practice of going to a Pandit for wearing a sacred thread. Why to wear a thread, which breaks away after sometime? For him the cotton should be of mercy and the thread of contentment, knots of self-control and twist of truth; this thread of soul will never wear away. The Guru is critical of the ritual of alms-giving for the *Pitris* (forefathers). He clearly asserts that one reaps the rewards of his own actions. He is equally critical of the supposition of impurity caused by child-birth (or miscarriage) in a family. For him all such impurities are misapprehension. The pure are not those who take a bath. The pure are only those who remember the Lord. They are the seekers after truth. They lead a life of piety and good actions and never set an evil foot. They are unattached and eat and drink less.

The Guru found the famine of truth in the land of sages (*rishis*), therefore he became critical of the people as a whole, of

Muslims devoid of justice, of Hindus and other people devoid of ethical and spiritual values, of Yogis devoid of the real sense of Yoga. Greed was the king, sin his minister, falsehood his captain and lust his lieutenant. In such conditions, life was at its lowest ebb. Women had no honour and voice in the social set-up. The Guru said, "Why should we talk ill of her, who gives birth to the kings and who is the cause of the whole humanity".

Mysticism : Though *Jiva* is powerless before Almighty, it being the part and parcel of the Lord, can rise to spiritual heights by imbibing the virtues and qualities of God and by remembering His Name, and following the instructions of the religious preceptor. The Guru (religious preceptor) is the light for the world. The suns and moons are insignificant before his light; without the Guru, we are like the useless plant in the field. With the Grace of the Lord, we meet the Guru. The *Jiva* after undergoing many births ultimately comes to the Guru for the Word. It is plain truth that there is none so generous as the true Guru. On meeting him, Truth is realised and the ego is destroyed.

We must be cautious about false Gurus in the world, because they mislead their disciples. Without the true Guru, no one has ever realised the Lord. The final emancipation is obtained through the true Guru, in whose company the worldly attachments end. If there is no water, there can be no pitcher. In a similar manner, there can be no knowledge without the Guru. The Guru gives knowledge and the Name. Remembrance of the Name leads the disciple to the Lord. Those who remember the Name are the gainers. All others are losers. The disciples are true lovers and true servants. They surrender completely to the Lord without any 'ifs' and 'buts'.

III

Guru Nanak has referred to the four Vedas in *Āsā ki Vār*. The Upanishads are the significant portions of the Vedas. They are known as *Gyan Kānda*. Whereas the Guru rejects the *Karma Kānda* and *Upāsana Kānda*, he was deeply steeped in the Upanishadic lore. His longer poems may be called modern Upanishads. They educate us about the nature of Brahman like Upanishads and like them also lay emphasis on *Parā Vidyā* or *Brahm-Vidyā*.

ĀSĀ KI VĀR and KATHOPANISHAD

A great similarity has been noted between *Āsā ki Vār* and *Kathopanishad*, which is an ample proof that the Guru had studied the Upanishads minutely.

Kathopanishad contains the story of Yama and Naciketa, wherein Naciketa asks Yama : "Some say that the soul exists after the death of man, while others say that it does not exist. I would like to know the truth. There is no speaker to be found like thee and no other boon like this". Yama asks Naciketa to choose another boon, but Naciketa insists on knowing the truth and there begins the enfoldment of the mystery of the soul.

Yama distinguishes between the *good* and the *pleasant*. The sages choose the path of the 'good' and discard the 'pleasant'. In *Āsā ki Vār*, we find the remembrance of the Name of the Lord as the path of the 'good' and the love for material things as the path of the 'pleasant'.

The Guru says :

- 1 We shall leave in this world the pleasant, beautiful form. (Paurī 14)
- 2 We should do away with greed and concentrate on the Name of the Lord. (Paurī 10)

Yama says : “Those who live in the midst of ignorance, but think themselves wise and learned go round and with erring step, deluded, as blind people led by a blind”.

In *Āsā ki Vār*, the Guru says :

- 1 Liers do not get honour, their faces are black and they go to hell. (Paurī 2)
- 2 For the whole life, they may study; with every breath they may study. But only one thing is useful, all else is egoistic and useless. (Paurī 9, Shloka 1)

Yama says : “The necessary causes for gaining the next world are not apparent to the careless young man, who is foolish by the delusion of wealth. Thinking that this world exists and not the other, he is repeatedly subject to my sway”.

The Guru says in *Āsā ki Vār* :

- 1 He gets his orders fulfilled to his heart's content, but has to traverse the narrow path after death, He goes to hell barefooted, very much horrified, and repents for his sins. (Paurī 14)

Yama says : “The soul is not gained by many because they do not hear of it, and which many do not know although they hear of it; wonderful is the speaker of the soul, ingenious the receiver, wonderful the knower instructed by an ingenious teacher”. The teacher in this case is the true Guru, about whom we have referred to above in connection with *Āsā ki Vār*.

Yama says : “I know worldly happiness is transient; for the firm one is not obtained by what is not firm”.

In *Āsā ki Vār*, this idea appears in this way :
The knowledge is not obtained by talking . . .

Continuing his views about the soul, Yama says : “Know the soul as the rider, the body as the chariot, the intellect as the

charioteer and the mind as the reins.

We find the description of this chariot in *Āsā ki Vār* :

The bead of the body, saith Nanak, (contains the mystery of) one chariot and one charioteer. (Paurī 13, Shloka 1)

The unwise enjoy the outward material world; therefore, they cannot liberate themselves from the cycle of births and deaths. Yama says : "Whoever is unwise with reins never applied, has the senses unsubdued like wicked horses of the charioteer; . . . whoever is unwise, unmindful, always impure, does not gain the goal, but descends to the world again".

The same thing has been expressed in *Āsā ki Vār* in the following manner :

With horses swift like wind, with palaces luxuriously decorated,

With houses and property, persons seem to have settled permanently.

They enjoy to their heart's content, but do not gain the goal, because they do not know Hari.

They order and enjoy; looking at the palaces, they have forgotten death. (Paurī 17)

In the last portion of the Upanishad, Yama says to Naciketa :

Through fear of Hari burns the fire,

Through fear of Hari burns the sun.

Through fear of Hari runs Indra, the wind and death.

We have a complete *Shloka* with a regard to this thought in *Āsā ki Vār* :

Through fear of Him, the wind blows,

Through fear of Him, lakhs of rivers flow,

Through fear of Him labours the fire,
Through fear of Him, the earth remains overburdened,
Through fear of Him, stands Yama at his gate,
Through fear of Him, move the sun and the moon,
They traverse millions of miles, with no end.
Under His fear, are *Siddhas*, *Buddhas*, gods and *Nathas*,
Under His fear the skies have spread,
Under His fear are warriors and brave people,
Under His fear multitudes come and go.
All are under His fear, with the writing on the forehead.
Only One, True and Formless, is Fearless, saith Nanak.
(Pauri 4, Shloka 1)

The Guru has his own way of expression, which can be ascertained from the above examples. The similarity of thought at some places is a vital proof of his deep study of the old scriptures. It may also be the result of his discussions with the Pandits of his times.

Appendix II

GURU NANAK, GURU GOBIND SINGH AND AMRIT

Amrit is a Sanskrit word which means 'ambrosia' or the 'nectar of immortality'.

The Yogis, who could see the macrocosm in microcosm, located this Amrit in *the Moon*, from where it trickles down through the nerve called *shankhani* and passages out through the Tenth Door (*Dasam Dvār*). If the Yogi is unable to preserve this Amrit, it is dried up by the heat of *the Sun*.

Sikh Gurus and Amrit

The stalwarts of Bhakti Movement, who came into contact with the Yogis of their times also saw this nectar of immortality within their body. However, their method of attainment of this ambrosia was quite different from that of the Yogis. Still we find that, in order to bring home their idea of Amrit, they have sometimes used the Yogic terminology. The Yogi has to regulate his breath and awaken the *Kundalini* in order to rise higher on the spiritual plane. He is concerned with nerves and *chakras*. But the common man could not go in for the complicated and hazardous Yogic discipline of nerves and *chakras*. The Guru-soul wanted an easy and facile discipline which could be practised by the masses. The method was only devotion to the Lord through the repetition of His Name.

For Sikh Gurus and the saint-poets of the *Ādi Granth*, the Name of the Lord was the real ambrosia or Amrit. Guru Nanak says, "The ambrosia, for which you have come into this world, can only be obtained from the Guru. The ambrosia, for which you wander in the world and undergo great troubles, in fact, lies within the body".¹ Guru Angad, the second Sikh Guru, says, "Those who remember Thy Name, they are absorbed in their hearts. For them, saith Nanak, there is only one ambrosia and none other".² Guru Amar Das, the third Sikh Guru, says, "The gods, sages and men, all are in search of Amrit, which I have obtained from the Guru. By the grace of the Guru, I have obtained Amrit and have kept the True Lord enshrined in my heart".³ He says again, "The word is the ambrosia and the faithful obtains it, saith Nanak".⁴ Guru Ram Das, the fourth Sikh Guru, says, "Amrit is the name of Hari, O my self ! It is obtained by following the advice of the Guru. The ego and māyā are poison, O my self ! This poison is removed by the Amrit of (the Name of) Hari".⁵

-
1. Jis jalnidhi kārān tum jag āe so Amrit Gur pai jiu
Bāhari dhūdat bahuta dukhu pāvahi ghari Amrit ghat
māhi jiu. (Soraṭhi M. I, p. 598)
 2. Jin vadiāi tere Nām ki te ratte man mahi,
Nanak Amrit ek hai dūjā Amrit nahi
(Vār Sārang Shloka M. II, p. 1238)
 3. Suri nar muni jan Amrit khojade so Amrit Gur te pāiā,
Pāiā Amrit Gur kriṇā kīnī saccā manī vasāiā.
(Ānand, p. 918)
 4. Amrit eko sabad hai Nanak gurmukhi pāiā
(Vār Soraṭhi, Shloka M. III, p. 644)
 5. Amrit Hari Hari nām hai meri jinduriē Amrit gurmaṭ
pāe Rām
Haumai māyā bikhi hai meri jinduriē Hari Amrit bikhu
lahi jāe Rām. (Bihāgarā M. IV, p. 538)

Guru Nanak has described the method of attainment of this Amrit in the following metaphorical way in two of his hymns :

1. In the workshop of self-restraint, poise is the goldsmith,
The intellect is the anvil and knowledge is the hammer,
Fear of the Lord is the bellowpipe, which fans the fire
of continuous effort,

The vessel is of devotion, wherein melts the Amrit."¹

(Japji)

2. After the vessel is cleansed and purified with incense, go
in for the milk.

Put the milk of good actions, apply the yeast of attention and prepare the curd with detachment,

Repeat only one Name because other works are useless.

Catch the mind like wooden chips fastened with the churning rope of the state of awakening,

The name of the Lord be repeated with the tongue moving like the churning staff,

In this way, Amrit can be obtained. (Sūhi Mahla I)²

Amrit or Initiation Ceremony in Sikhism

This *Miracle of the Name* works in the initiation ceremony of the Sikhs. The initiation ceremony is known as "Amrit Chhakna"

1. Jat pāhārā dhīrajū suniāru, Anarāni mati vedu hathiār.
Bhau khala agan tap tāu, Bhāndā bhāu Amrit titu dhāli
(Japji, p. 8)

2. Bhāndā dhoe bais dhup devahu tau dūdhai kau jāvahu
...

Rasnā Nām japahu tap mathiai in bidhi Amrit pāvahu.
(Sūhi M. I, p. 728)

(drinking of the nectar of immortality). By this ceremony a *Sikh* is knighted a 'Singh' (lion). He becomes the 'Khalsa', or the Pure and is enjoined to follow the discipline ordained by the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh. At this ceremony the disciple drinks the nectar (Amrit) prepared with double-edged sword, which is called 'Khande ki Pāhul'. The word *Pāhul* has been used for *Amrit* in the context of initiation. The double-edged sword is considered the symbol of Almighty. In a bowl, full of water, *patāshās* or sugar-crystals are dissolved by stirring with the double-edged sword and over this bowl the Name of the Lord or His praises are chanted. Thus the name of the Omnipotent is instilled in the sweet water turning it into 'Amrit' which gives both *Bhakti* (devotion) and *Shakti* (bravery) to the disciple.

On the historic occasion of the Baisakhi of 1699, when five 'Beloved ones' came forward at the call of the Guru, the Guru created the Khalsa, giving the Sikh brotherhood a new and distinctive look and the discipline mentioned above. He wanted to create a band of lions for all times, who could also touch spiritual heights. Ladies, who, till then, were more or less like household possessions, could also come within the fold of the Khalsa. They could take up arms like men and could also rise higher on the spiritual plane. When the holy nectar was being prepared by the Guru, Mata Sahib Kaur was asked to put *Patāshās* (sugar-crystals) in it. This act of the Guru showed that no project could be completed without the participation of womenfolk. It raised the status of women. A Sikh lady was an equal partner with her husband. She could freely join the holy congregation and could be initiated into the Khalsa brotherhood.

The Five Ks

We know full well that the Sikh Gurus rose above all formalism and symbolism. They opposed symbols because their inner significance was not understood. They laid stress on the

spiritual meaning. Guru Gobind Singh gave new symbols to the Khalsa. He asked the disciples to wear long *Keshas* (hair) like the old Sages because essentially the Khalsa was to lead a saintly life. A Khalsa was further asked to wear a comb (*kanghā*) for cleanliness of hair, a steel bangle (*kaṛā*) as a symbol for honest and right use of our hand, the short drawers (*kachh*) as a symbol for continence and the sword (*kirpān*) as an armour of protection. The comb is a general symbol for cleanliness of mind and body, the steel bangle is a general symbol for purity of action, the short drawers is a general symbol for purity of character, and the sword is a general symbol for the Primal Power (Ādi Shakti). The disciple has to understand the significance and spirit of each symbol and keep it alive within himself.

At the time of Amrit ceremony, the Guru administered Amrit to the five 'beloved ones' and in turn drank the nectar of immortality from their hands. The Guru became the disciple and vested the authority of the Guru in "The Five". "The Five" constituted the holy congregation, which is the true abode of the Guru. The Guru ordained that wherever five true Sikhs assembled, he would be present among them; therefore, five disciples could perform the initiation ceremony.

Miss Dorothy Field writes in her monograph *The Religion of the Sikhs* :

"But the great work of Gobind Singh's life was the institution of *Khande-di-Pāhul* or 'Baptism of the Sword'. This ceremony became so important, and its effects so vital and far-reaching, that it will not be out of place to give a detailed account of its institution.

"At a critical moment in the fortunes of the Sikhs the Guru called his disciples together and asked if any were ready to die for him. Five professed their willingness to do so. In order to test their sincerity the Guru

took each in turn into an enclosure, from where he reappeared, exhibiting a dripping sword. None of the five, however, shrank from the ordeal. Only after the fifth had gone to apparent martyrdom was it discovered that the blood was that of a goat, and that all the Sikhs were still alive. The Guru then declared that Sikhism could now only be maintained by force of arms. He then poured water into an iron vessel and stirred it with a two-edged sword, repeating Guru Nanak's *Japji*, his own *Japji*, Guru Amar Das' *Ānand*, and some hymns* of his own composition. It is said that as he was performing this ceremony, his wife arrived carrying some Indian sweetmeats. She had come out of curiosity, but the Guru asked her to throw the sweets into the holy water. He said that he had begun to establish the *Khalsa* as his sons, and that a mother was necessary at all times for sons. He also said that the sweets poured into the water typified the affection which was to exist between Sikhs. The Guru then gave five palmsful of the water to each of the chosen five. He sprinkled it five times on their hair and eyes and caused them to repeat *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh*—"The Khalsa of God, Victory to God . . ." These words became the new war-cry of the Sikhs. The Guru also gave them the name of 'Singh', or lion, which was to be added to the name of each baptised disciple. The following instructions were then added :

"Sikhs were to wear five articles whose names begin with a K. *Kes*, long hair, *Kanghā*, a comb, *Kirpān*, a sword, *Kachh*, short drawers, and *Karā*, a steel bracelet. They were to be loyal to their masters and never to turn their backs on a foe. A belief in the

* These hymns are *chaupai* and ten *swayyās*.

equality of all men was to take the place of all distinctions of caste. They were to rise at dawn, bathe, read the hymns of the Gurus, meditate on the Creator, and share a common meal . . .

"After giving these instructions the Guru desired the neophytes to baptise him in return. They at first protested, but he pointed out that the baptism put them all on a footing of equality, and the *Khalsa*, as the sect was now called, was equal to the Guru. They yielded; and after this many thousands were baptised."

'The Five' were delegated the authority of the Guru; therefore, in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib, the five beloved ones perform the initiation ceremony. These five are selected from the *Sangat* (holy congregation). They should be men of high character and known for their pure life and practice. They should be *Gurumkh*, the true followers of the Guru, who have faithfully followed the discipline.¹

Every person can be initiated into his discipline. There are no prejudices and distinctions of caste and creed, The All-pervading and ever-awakening Lord is worshipped. The Guru himself has written the following verse about the Khalsa :

The Perfect Light illumines his heart

Then you know him as the Khalsa, the Pure.²

The Five Banis

The five *banis* (poems) which were recited at the time of the preparation of Amrit have been named earlier. They are *Japji*

-
1. For the discipline see the chapters entitled "Ethics of Guru Nanak" and "Mysticism of Guru Nanak".
 2. Pūran jot jagai ghat mahi tab khālas tahe nikhālas jānai.
(Swayyā M.X)

of Guru Nanak, *Ānand Sāhib* of Guru Amar Das and *Jāp Sāhib*, *Chaupai* and *Swayyās* of Guru Gobind Singh. The praises of the Supreme Lord have been sung in these poems.

A critical study of *Japji* has been given in Appendix I (A).

Ānand Sāhib is a longer poem of the third Sikh Guru, Guru Amar Das, written in *Rāmakālī Rāga*. It consists of forty stanzas. In this poem the Guru elaborates his ideas of bliss. God is bliss; therefore, the state of bliss is attained only when we are in tune with Him. The disciple has to make an earnest effort under the guidance of the Guru. He has to surrender himself completely to the discipline ordained by the Guru. Since the Khalsa is to remain in a state of bliss at all times, this poem is recited at all the functions.

Jāp Sāhib of Guru Gobind Singh is a compendium of the Names and attributes of the Supreme Lord.

Chaupai of Guru Gobind Singh is an invocation for the blessings of the Primal Power.

Swayyās (ten in number) of Guru Gobind Singh lay emphasis on the love for the Lord, rejecting all formalism, worldly pomp and show and mentioning the transitoriness of the world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. *The Ādi Granth.*
2. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* edited by James Hastings.
3. *Sacred Books of the East* edited by Max Müller.
4. *Dictionary of Islam* by Thomas Patrick Hughes.
5. *Introduction to Comparative Philosophy* by P.T. Raju.
6. *History of Religions* by E.O. James.
7. *History of Western Philosophy* by Bertrand Russell.
8. *A History of Philosophy* by Frank Thilly.
9. *History of Philosophy—Eastern and Western*, 2 Vols. Sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Government of India.
10. *Outlines of Hinduism* by T. M. P. Mahadevan.
11. *The Fountainhead of Religion* by Ganga Prasad.
12. *Indian Philosophy* by S. Radhakrishnan, 2 Vols.
13. *History of Indian Philosophy* by Jadunath Sinha, 2 Vols.
14. *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy* by Dr. Chandradhar Sharma.
15. *The Dictionary of Philosophy* by Dagobert D. Runes.
16. *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* by R.C. Zaehner.
17. *The Gospel of Israel* by Duncan Greenless.
18. *The Religions of Man* by Huston Smith.

19. *A Short History of our Religion*—From Moses to the Present Day by D. C. Somervell.
20. *The Ethics of the Hindus* by Susil Kumar Maitra.
21. *Development of Moral Philosophy in India* by Surama Das Gupta.
22. *Aspects of Indian Philosophy* by Gopinath Kaviraj.
23. *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. Two—The Creative Period by S. K. Belvalkar and R. D. Ranade.
24. *Studies in Vedanta* by Vasudeva J. Kirtikar.
25. *The Philosophy of Ramanuja* by Dr. Krishna Datta Bharadwaj.
26. *Philosophy of Gorakhnath* by Akashaya Kumar Benerjea.
27. *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. Seven—Indian Mysticism : Mysticism in Maharashtra by R. D. Ranade.
28. *Hindu Mysticism* by Dr. S. N. Das Gupta.
29. *Theory and Art of Mysticism* by R. Mukerjee.
30. *Sufism* by A. J. Arberry.
31. *The Nature of Mysticism* by C. Jinarajadasa.
32. *Sadhana* by Swami Sivananda.
33. *Archaeology of World Religions*, 3 Vols. by Jack Finegan.
34. *Story of Philosophy* by Will Durant.
35. *Materialist View on Reality* by Ovshy Yakhot.
36. *Gurmat Nirnay Sagar* by Pandit Tara Singh Narotam.
37. *Gur Shabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh* by Bhai Kahan Singh.